# GLOVES
## PAST AND PRESENT

WILLARD M. SMITH

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By
WILLARD M. SMITH

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G.C.

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# PREFACE

MOST MEN, apparently, take their gloves for granted. In these days the little refinements of civilization are accepted among us without a thought; but in so doing we lose a great deal of enjoyment which we never were intended to overlook. Least of all are our gloves commonplace. Mr. Chesterton has something to say about Tremendous Trifles. To my mind, he might have been talking about gloves. If you choose to think of them as trifles, then they are tremendous.

For thirty years I have devoted myself to the practical problems of the glove industry, and my connection with one of the substantial firms of master-merchant-glovers in the world has taught me how little gloves are known or appreciated by the millions of persons who buy them and wear them. The pursuit of glove lore —the historic romance of the glove—has long since been with me a selfish recreation. Now I desire to share it, as well as the practical knowledge, with all men and women who have missed seizing upon the real relation which gloves bear to life.

In the work of gathering together and arranging the material in this book, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Miss Marion Savage, who has collaborated faithfully with me, and has shared in no small degree my own enthusiasm for gloves, past and present.

WILLARD M. SMITH.

June, 1917.

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# GLOVES, PAST AND PRESENT

## Chapter I.

## WHY GLOVES?

"None other symbol—the cross excepted—has so entered into the feelings and the affections of men, or so ruled and bound in integrity and right the transactions of life, as the glove."—*William S. Beck.*

IT is no unusual thing to meet American women who are connoisseurs of the hand-made laces brought to this country from abroad. Laces, like painting or sculpture, are an object of study; they have been raised to the level of the fine arts. But how often do we come across a woman—it matters not how intelligent she may be—who has any real standards to guide her in the selection of gloves? Whether we have need, in a business sense, of expert knowledge on this subject or not, nearly everybody spends enough money yearly on this single detail of dress to be interested to know just what he is getting. Yet, there is scarcely any other department of merchandise with which the average person has so hasty and superficial an acquaintance. Nor is this by any means the layman's own fault entirely.

Let us look for a moment at the fabrics which go into the making of women's suits and gowns; shoes, men's shirts, carpets and furs: we recognize that all these long have been a matter of public education. Where is the woman who does not know the leading materials for coats and dresses? She may live far from the great commercial centres,

but her women's magazine, published in New York, Philadelphia or Chicago, brings her descriptions by an expert, with colored, photographic reproductions, of the fashionable novelties. As for the experienced city shopper, if she were tested with her eyes shut, simply by touching the fabric she could identify it in most cases and could readily distinguish between goods of fine and inferior quality.

In the carpet department not infrequently a customer talks intelligently of "three frame" and "six frame" Brussels, or insists upon being shown "hand-cut" Wilton. Even the male shopper is not so indifferent in these days as not to know the names of the several varieties of fine cottons of which his shirts are made. He is aware of the difference between plain woven madras and crepe madras; he may prefer cotton cheviot, and will stipulate whether it shall be the Oxford or the "basket" weave. But if he be really fastidious, the chances are that he will demand "soisette." In the last few years an amazing amount of style and seasonal variety have been introduced into shoes and furs. The result is that in these lines we feel obliged to be informed up to the minute. But, while fabrics and fashions in gloves constantly are changing, how much discrimination do most persons display in the selecting of this equally important item of apparel?

A well-dressed woman enters the glove department of a large shop on Fifth Avenue, New York. She may be an independent professional woman or she may be the wife or daughter of a man of means. In either case

she should be concerned to know what value she receives for the money she spends. She asks for mocha gloves; but finding these rather more expensive than she had supposed, she may be persuaded to accept a sueded sheepskin under the misnomer of mocha, which substitute—could she but know it—is a fraud, as even the finest suedes in point of durability are invariably inferior to, while they strikingly resemble, the Arabian mocha. The fallacy consists in her not being educated to know that it is the genuine mocha which she requires and for which she should be perfectly willing to pay. The unqualified superiority of real mocha to sueded sheepskin is worth every cent of the difference she would put into the purchase.

On the other hand, a man has been told that the only serviceable heavy glove for common wear is the cape glove. He insists, therefore, upon having the genuine cape—a name originally and properly used to designate gloves made of superior skins from the Cape district of South Africa. As a matter of fact, the soft, pliable, widely-worn glove in various weights, now commercially known as cape, is made from skins grown in many lands—principally lamb, tanned and dressed by the "napa dipped" method. In consequence of having wool hide, these skins are not so tough as the Cape Hope goat with the hair hide. One pays less for them than for the real cape, but, for ordinary appearance, they are a fair substitute, and their wearing qualities undoubtedly meet the average requirement. A practical saving of this sort the public should be taught to appreciate.

But not for material reasons alone should gloves be given a prominent place in the curriculum of popular "uplift." In the most obvious sense they are too little known, too vaguely appreciated, to be sure; and yet, the satisfaction of being well-gloved consists in something more than merely the delightful sensation of having one's hands neatly, warmly and substantially covered. We think of gloves first, no doubt, as a daily necessity. But we also value the finer qualities as a mark of elegance. Beautiful gloves impart the *coup de grace* to the formal costume of either man or woman. At the same time, clinging to this luxury, like a perfume of old, we are dimly conscious of an aura of half-forgotten associations, linking the glove with royalty, chivalry and romance; with famous affairs of honor, with the pomp and ceremonial of the Church, with countless dramatic episodes in history and literature.

How does it happen that, instinctively, we invest this trifle with so much meaning? Can it be that we are the repository of memories of past splendors, invoked by a familiar object which has all but lost its symbolic and poetic significance of ancient times? Even to-day the wearing of gloves lends to the individual a sense of dignity and personal distinction. Like Mrs. Wilfer, of Dickens fame, our grandeur is increased by our gloves.

In the pages which follow we shall discover that the background of our subject is one of the richest and most picturesque we could desire to explore. Gloves have deeply affected the lives of human beings from the very earliest periods. They have descended

to us from a remote antiquity, and are in very fact our inherited title to nobility, for they were bequeathed to us by the princely prelates, the kings and over-lords of the past, whose chief insignia and most treasured badge of honor was the glove. To comprehend all that they have brought with them down through the centuries we must retrace a vast deal of history, and let our imaginations play over scenes and customs far removed from our own day.

We shall find the glove intimately bound up with the development of social usages in every land. To solemn observances in which the glove filled a special role, much of the impressiveness of the stately rites of the mediæval church was due. The white linen glove on the hand of a bishop literally represented to the people the stainless purity of the revered palm raised in benediction. The glove itself was holy. No layman dared to clothe his hands in the presence of the clergy. Kings and the military, however, wore gloves with quite a different meaning. In appearance, also, their gloves were utterly unlike those consecrated for religious use. Of heavy leather, elaborately tooled or decorated, or the mailed gauntlet which formed part of a warrior's armor, they signified authority, power, and were often conveyed from one prince to another as an expression of hostility, or as a promise of good faith.

Princely etiquette, indeed, revolved about the glove to such a degree that the latter became, as it were, the proxy of its master, his embassador, the mute herald of the royal will. What a high ethical bond and pledge

of honor that leathern effigy of a ruler's hand actually constituted! And as the glove descended with the customs of feudal tenure from sovereign to liege lord, and became gradually the regalia of a growing landed aristocracy, how the manners of semi-barbarous Europe were moulded and softened by the glove! At first we find it the jealous device of the royal few. Then it becomes the badge of superiority among the over-lords. Their followers receive it; and, slowly, through the centuries, this fascinating bit of personal apparel works like leaven until it at last is recognized as the mark of gentlefolk everywhere. It spreads in proportion as liberty and culture are diffused among the people. Follow the progress of the glove, and you trace the growth in enlightenment and refinement of the nations. One of the true forerunners of democracy—as democracy means the elevating, not the levelling, of mankind—the glove takes its place among the civilizing forces of the world.

No small part of the importance which attaches to the subject of these investigations lies in the relation gloves bear to the history of modern industry. We shall find that the position of the glove-makers among the mediæval craftsmen was unique, and of the utmost consequence to the industrial evolution of Europe. The life of a French city has depended for many centuries upon the development of the glove drama. And, in their turn, what have not the glove-makers of Grenoble meant to the wealth and artistic prestige of France? In the annals of the world's trade—from the early days of barter

and exchange down to the present methods of international commerce—gloves have always been conspicuous. The product in itself is worthy of our wonder. We may marvel at the beautiful finish, that anything so delicate can also be so strong; we may admire the style, the cut, the fit of the glove of to-day. And yet, the perfection of the glove art has by no means been reached.

To the simple prototype of four fingers, thumb, palm, back and wrist, the glove-makers of our time have added all that makes the present glove elegant beyond any which has preceded it. Here we have, perhaps, the most interesting article of personal apparel regardless of the wearer's sex. For a glove is a glove, whether it graces a woman's slender hand or a man's stouter member. The same cannot be claimed for the shoe—at least, not since the passing of the mannish girl. The high-arched, French-heeled, parti-colored footgear which to-day is patronized by the feminine species has little in common with the broad-built, low-last article in which the male walks comfortably about his business. The tradition of the glove, however, is less erratic, and equally applicable to man or woman.

It is perfectly possible to out-countenance boredom by turning to our simplest, our most casually accepted, possessions. Even our gloves may kindle in us delight by their beauty, or may plunge us into the mysteries of the past. Gloves are history. Gloves are an art. Far from being the humble member of our wardrobe we sometimes have carelessly supposed them to be, they are of exceed-

ingly ancient lineage, and have retained much of their original regal and aristocratic character. Though once a symbol and a cult, gloves have been adapted to our Twentieth Century needs, and the subtleties of a new age are finding expression in the tireless multiplying of the finest gloves to suit every conceivable occasion.

The glove which encases your hand—no matter how much a part of yourself through daily familiarity it may seem—never can be anything but a stranger to you and unappreciated, until you know gloves. Even the sense of politeness and prestige which you enjoy is not enough; the glove legend also should be yours. Not without good reason are we inspired to live up to our gloves.

## Chapter II.

# ANCIENT HISTORY OF GLOVES

"A man plucked off his glove and gave it to his neighbor: and this was for a testimony in Israel."—*Old Testament, Chaldaic Version: Ruth: ch. iv., vs. 7.*

GLOVES are so ancient that the first mention of them in literature is to be found in a great classic of three thousand years ago—the Bible. Zealous disputants in all kinds of causes have had a trick of twisting Holy Writ to serve the purpose of their arguments. But in appropriating the above lines from the Book of Ruth, the writer has not been guilty of taking liberties with the Scriptures—even though the passage does not read as he has quoted it in the King James Version.

Turning to the authorized text, we find: "Now this was the manner in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor, and this was for a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe."

A certain learned Hebrew of high literary attainments, M. Josephs, a noted authority in the early part of the nineteenth century, in dealing with this passage bids us follow the Targum, or Chaldaic version of the Old Testament, which renders, instead of shoe, the word *glove*. He reminds us that the men who wrote the Targum lived fifteen hundred years before the translators of our English Bible; that their rendition grew directly out

of the oral interpretations and paraphrases of the Scriptures read in the synagogues—a custom which began, probably, soon after the return of the Jews from captivity. The Targumists, of course, were much closer to the original Hebrew usages than the mediæval scribes. The disputed phrase in their version, *narthek yad,* means "the covering of the right hand." It is derived from the Hebrew text, *nangal,* which, employed verbally, means to close or enclose. The expression, *nangal regel,* is, literally, "to enclose the foot" and signifies a shoe. The use of *nangal* alone, however, as a noun, always implied an article enclosing the hand—in other words, a glove. There can be no doubt that the writer of the Chaldaic version accepted the term as a hand-covering, not a foot-covering—even specifying that the glove given as a testimony in Israel was drawn off the *right* hand.

Both ancient and modern rabbinical scholars, we are told, agree in rendering the word from the original as "glove," not shoe. And Joel Levy, a distinguished German translator, gave, instead of shoe, his picturesque, native idiom of *hand-schuh* (hand-shoe), by which gloves are known in Germany to this day.

Added to etymological testimony, moreover, is the evidence of ancient custom. Gloves, in the symbolical sense, have been employed as a token of good faith as far back as history can be traced. The shoe, on the other hand, never is used figuratively in Holy Writ except to express humility or supine obedience. The man who wished to

make a compact with his neighbor, as Boaz when he bought the lands of Ruth, must offer his glove as pledge in the transaction. The very same practice is common in the Orient to-day.

Challenge by the glove also appears to have been customary from antiquity. In the one hundredth and eighth Psalm, the prophet in an ecstacy of triumph cries: "Over Edom will I cast out my glove!" Had this warrior of the spirit merely thrown a shoe over the city he had vowed to reclaim to Jehovah, what boastful promise would there have been in that?

Among the Jews, however, three thousand years ago, gloves were by no means in common use. Probably they were worn only by men of high rank, and then solely on ceremonial occasions. We have reason to suppose that kings wore them, for in the mural paintings of Thebes ambassadors are depicted bearing from some far country gifts of gloves. The women certainly did not wear them, for they are not mentioned in the exhaustive list of "bravery," enumerated by Isaiah (Chapter III.), the vainglorious fallals of which the daughters of Zion in their pride were to be despoiled on the Day of Doom. "Feet-rings, neck chains, thin veils tires or bonnets, zones or girdles, jewels for the nostrils, embroidered robes, tunics, transparent garments, fine linen vests, armlets"—all such fineries as these must the fair Israelites relinquish at the sound of the last trump. Surely, had gloves been among their vanities, these also must have been confiscated by the Inexorable Judge!

Nearly a century after the Book of Ruth was written, Homer relates how he came upon Laertes, the father of Ulysses, working in his garden (for he was a farmer) "while gloves secured his hands to shield them from the thorns." So, we know that the early Greeks wore gloves. It is striking to note that they employed them, too, for humble and useful purposes. They were not monopolized by priests and kings. However, we are given no hint how Laertes' gloves were shaped nor of what materials they were made. Probably they resembled the modern mitten, for it is not until under the Roman emperors that we actually learn that gloves were made with fingers. These were called, specially, *digitalia,* to distinguish them from the *chirothocae,* or fingerless variety.

Virgil makes reference to gauntlets worn at the Trojan contests, as "the gloves of death"; and he describes gloves worn by Eryx, "composed of seven folds of the thickest bull's hide, sewn and stiffened with knots of lead and iron."

The gloves of the Persians, we may suspect, were not of the warlike type, but were sported simply for luxury and display. Zenophon who, somebody has remarked, "had the courage of his dislikes," despised the ancient Persians and stigmatized them as effeminate because they gloried in their gloves. In his *Cyropaedia* he lays stress on the fact that on one occasion Cyrus was actually known to go forth "without his gloves"!

Varro, contemporary of Cicero, observes in his *De Re Rustica* that "olives gathered by the naked hand are preferable to those

pulled with gloves on." The Epicureans evidently had adopted the theory that fruit, to be fully enjoyed, should not even be handled in the plucking. Again, among the Romans, we find gloves an article of utility, worn by agriculturists—though it is likely that these hand-coverings were in the shape of mittens and not of the *digitalia* style. To the latter appear to have been attached far greater prestige.

At the same time, the fingered gloves also had come to be used for a practical protection. Pliny, the younger, speaking of the private secretary of his illustrious uncle, writes: "His amanuensis" (who accompanied him on his notable journey to Mount Vesuvius) "wore gloves upon his hands that winter, lest the severity of the weather should make him lose any time" (from his duties as scribe). It is to gloves, then, that we are indebted in part for some of the most remarkable passages in the works of the celebrated Roman naturalist, whose scientific enthusiasm eventually cost him his life in the eruption of Vesuvius, 79 A.D.

Not until the age of Musonious, the philosopher, who lived near the close of the first century of the Christian era, do we find gloves among the Romans falling into disrepute. Musonious ejaculates: "It is shameful that persons in perfect health should clothe their hands with soft and hairy coverings!" The denunciation of the dress-reformers of those days, however, seems to have had as little effect in stemming the tide of fashion as in our times.

A truly revolting use to which gloves are said to have put—if we may believe certain tales of the famous story-teller, Athenæus (200 A.D.)—is described in a bit of ancient fiction in which he relates that "a well-known glutton," one of his own contemporaries, "always came to the table with gloves upon his hands, that he might be able to handle and eat the meat while it was hot, and devour more than the rest of the company." No wonder the early Fathers of the Church looked upon gloves as vicious and corrupting! But their biting invective was directed principally against the effeminancy of those who fell victim to the pleasurable practice, and about the beginning of the ninth century ecclesiastical authority forbade the monks from wearing any gloves save those made of the tough, unyielding sheep-skin. Such, it was thought, could not possibly afford the brethren any sensuous enjoyment, nor tempt them into love of luxuries.

There is an ancient story of Saint Gudula, patroness of Brussels, which well illustrates the early Christian distrust of gloves. In Butler's Legends of the Saints, it is related of this holy woman—who died in 712 A.D.—that one day, kneeling at prayers barefooted, one of the monks, moved to compassion, "put his gloves upon her feet" to protect them from the cold stones of the floor. St. Gudula, however, snatched off the offending articles and contemptuously tossed them ceiling high. And there they remained, says the the legend, miraculously suspended in mid-air for one hour.

The first legal enactment concerning gloves

occurs in the records of France. About 790, Emperor Charlemagne granted unlimited rights of hunting to the abbots and monks of Sithin for the purpose of procuring deer skins for making covers for their books, and also for gloves and girdles. The bishops, however, grew to feel that theirs should be the exclusive privilege of wearing gloves of such fine quality; and by the Council of Aix, in the reign of Louis, Le Debonnaire, the inferior clergy were ordered to abstain from deer skin and to wear only sheep skin, as was formerly deemed fitting for monks.

In England gloves virtually "came over with the Conqueror." The French importation—which several centuries later was to be the cause of such intense commercial rivalry between the two countries—was the mailed glove of stout deer or sheep skin, with joined plates of metal affixed to the back and fingers. The early Saxons, however, wore gloves of a rude sort, for the derivation of the word from *gluf* is distinctly Saxon, and they are mentioned in the epic of *Beowulf,* composed in the seventh century, A.D. William S. Beck thinks that the early Britons may have been quick to appreciate the comfort afforded by the gloves worn by their Roman conquerors. It is known for a fact that the Britons of that age wore boots of untanned leather, and it should be no tax upon the imagination to suppose that if they protected one extremity they probably did the other.

But Professor Boyd Dawkins, without a doubt, has pushed the history of the glove farthest back of any antiquarian Profes-

sor Dawkins assures us that the cavemen wore gloves. He actually defines their style; they were "not of ordinary size," he tells us, "but reaching even to the elbows, anticipating by untold ages the multi-button gloves of the Victorian era." Now just when did these pre-historic, glove-wearing men live? Another eminent geologist holds that they inhabited the south of France before they were driven forth by the excruciating cold of the glacial period. It is impossible accurately to fix the date of the great ice age; Dr. Croll, however, and other celebrated scientists, appear to agree that it began about 240,000 years ago, that it lasted about 160,000 years and ended somewhat over 80,000 years since.

Here, then, is an antiquity for gloves which should satisfy our fondest ambitions! This theory also restores to France with a vengeance the original prestige for glove-making of which that country is so jealous. *Theory,* should we say? The cavemen's gloves, as we are distinctly told, were made of roughly dressed skins, sewn with elaborate bone needles; and an unmistakable drawing of such a glove was discovered by Professor Dawkins, rudely etched upon a bone, found among pre-glacial relics.

The glove, accordingly, dates from the twilight of mankind. The ancient peoples wore gloves; and by the tenth century in Europe we find them in fairly general use—to some degree as a practical protection and hand-covering, but, more strikingly, as the badge of royal or ecclesiastical authority and dignity.

The gentler sex, however, at that time had

by no means come into their own, so far as gloves were concerned. Among the early nations men seem to have enjoyed the monopoly of this article of dress, and the reason is plain to see, when we remember that gloves, in those days, were worn almost exclusively as part of the regalia of public office. The daughters of Israel, and the ladies of Persia, Greece, Rome and mediæval Europe, adopted the voluminous sleeve which came down over the hand and rendered gloves, for practical purposes, unnecessary. A manuscript of the tenth century, however, describes a hand-covering worn by an Anglo-Saxon lady which resembled a muffler provided with a separate division for the thumb. This was reproduced by Planché in his History of British Costume, and is colored blue. But the long, flowing sleeves were customary, and were even worn by both sexes—men in the ordinary walks of life, apparently, being compelled to content themselves with sharing the feminine expediency for keeping the hands warmly covered. For a man to be gloveless at that period certainly spelled humiliation!

It was not until the thirteenth century that the ladies of Europe blossomed forth in gloves—not of the mitten variety, but boasting four fingers as well as a thumb. The first to be introduced for the fair sex were made of linen, of simple design, and reached to the elbows to accommodate the short-sleeved gowns of the period. Not before Queen Elizabeth's time, however, did the elaborately embroidered, bejeweled and perfumed glove captivate woman's fancy and satisfy her feminine dreams of beauty and extravagance.

## Chapter III.

# THE LANGUAGE OF GLOVES

"Right, Caxon, right as my glove! By-the-by, I fancy that phrase comes from the custom of pledging a glove as a sign of irrefragable faith."—*The Antiquary: Sir Walter Scott.*

WE are so matter of fact in these days that, rarely, if ever, do we speak in symbols. The elaborate code of the glove has almost entirely dropped out of use. "And speaks all languages the rose," the poet reminds us, but it is doubtful whether the most romantic of flowers ever conveyed such wealth of meaning, even between tongue-tied lovers, as the glove. Certainly, in addition, the latter has expressed a far greater variety of lofty sentiments not connected with affairs of the heart. In the Church, on the throne, in civil law, on the bench, in private breaches of honor, at festivals of rejoicing and in the last solemn rites accorded to the dead, gloves for many centuries were an important part of the ceremonial, and still, to-day, are not without meaning.

Sometimes it is claimed that gloves became a symbol in the Church long before kings singled them out to embody a monarch's good faith or the royal consent. Of course kings wore gloves before the Christian Church came into being. But, as we have seen, the ancients seem to have attached less allegorical significance to gloves and to have regarded them more as a personal luxury. In the Orient, however, as the Bible shows, challenge by the glove was a recognized institution. Also, in the sales of lands, the

purchaser was given a glove to symbolize delivery or investiture—of which the passage from Ruth which heads the previous chapter is, probably, the most famous instance. From the Oriental custom Mediæval Europe derived the challenge, so picturesquely employed in history and in literature. A certain charter of the thirteenth century also names a case of re-investiture, or restitution of property, symbolically expressed by the person restoring the lands casting his glove upon the ground.

If the Greeks and the Romans were somewhat literal and coldly materialistic in their attitude toward gloves, it remained for mediæval Europe to raise them to a cult. In the Middle Ages men had a passion for glorifying the common utensils of life. Whether it was the clergy or royalty which first seized upon gloves to exalt them into the realm of the mysterious, causing them to be scarcely less revered than the king's or the bishop's own person, it would be difficult to say. But, as the gloves bestowed upon the kings of olden France at their coronations were blessed and presented by the archbishop of the realm—who, in this act, was simply following the ancient Eastern practice of performing investiture—it would appear that gloves were granted by the Church to the thrones; and that thus the monarch received this sign of his sovereignty as the gracious gift of the Spiritual Power, which enjoyed precedence in honoring the glove.

Certainly gloves were a mark of religious dignity at an extremely early period, and played a distinctive part in the rites and

services of the ancient Church. Officiating priests invariably consecrated the Holy Sacrament with gloves on their hands. This custom still obtains in the Church of England. Moreover, the laity always drew off their gloves within the sacred portals, where it was sacrilege to cover worldly hands even as the Fathers covered theirs.

To teach truth by sight was one of the great endeavors of the mediæval Church. We should not forget that the masses of the people in those days were untaught and child-like in their mental processes. The clergy were profound scholars, but they understood how to appeal to the minds of their communicants; they knew that their imaginations should be impressed, that sacred imagery should be indelibly stamped upon the sensitive-plate of the soul. Not lip-parables only, but allegories for the eye—visible symbols—conveyed sacred meanings where words could not. Thus art became the handmaiden of religion, and familiar objects were invested with hidden significance. In this catalogue gloves were by no means forgotten.

Bruno, Bishop of Segni, tells us that the gloves of the clergy were originally made of linen to denote that the hands they covered were chaste, pure, without blame. In 1287, Durandus, Bishop of Mende, went to great pains to prove that the sacred *chirothecae*—for the old Latin name had been kept—were white. He says: "It was specified that by these gloves the hands would be preserved chaste, clean during work, and free from every stain." The gloves which

encased the hands of Pope Boniface VIII., at the time of his burial, were of white silk, beautifully worked with the needle, and ornamented with a rich border, studded with pearls.

Considerably later—exactly when is not known—ecclesiastical gloves ceased to be invariably white, but changed their hue, like the other vestments, according to the current church seasons. Then the gloves of the church became glorious indeed in color, texture and design! St. Charles Borromeo prescribes that "they shall be woven throughout, and adorned with a golden circle on the outside."

The most famous gloves of this type which have been preserved—though the circle is of red silk, not of gold—are those of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, treasured to this day at Oxford. These gloves are at least five hundred and thirty years old. William of Wykeham was the founder of New College, Oxford, in 1379, and the gloves were probably worn by him at the opening religious ceremonial, April 14, 1386. It is extremely likely that they were made especially for that great occasion. They are still in a wonderful state of preservation, and some idea of their magnificance may be had even from their present appearance. They are made of crimson purl knitted silk, embroidered on the back and cuffs with gold, now faded and tarnished. The octagonal designs around the cuffs are separated by squares of emerald green silk; the cuffs are lined with crimson silk; and a double band of gold adorns each finger and thumb.

The circles are on the back of the hand, and with their sixteen flame-pointed arms, worked in gold, surround the sacred monogram.

In inventories of church furniture in the Middle Ages, gloves, elaborately decorated, frequently appear. These usually were encrusted with precious jewels and were so valuable that they were left as legacies. A pair of gloves was among the bequests of Bishop Riculfus who died in 915 A.D. Even Thomas à Becket—though it is reported that he never bathed—was buried in immaculate gloves. And we have proof that old mother Becket had to be handled with gloves, for at her baptism, pictured in an ancient illumination, the officiating bishop is represented in long, white *chirothecae* reaching clear above his venerable elbows.

Gloves in the Church symbolized purity of heart and deed. In an olden missal, ascribed to the seventh century, the officiating bishop, just before offering mass, draws on his snowy linen gloves with this prayer: "O Creator of all creatures, grant me, unworthiest of Thy servants, to put on the clothing of justice and joy, that I may be found with pure hands in Thy sight."

The royal glove, with which the king received his authority from earliest times, was usually purple, ornamented with pearls and precious stones. Such "were anciently deemed ensigns of imperial dignity," as Pachymenera records. Previous to the French Revolution, at the crowning of the Kings of France, it was customary for the archbishop to bless a pair of gloves and present them to the sovereign as an emblem of secure posses-

sion. In the English coronation ceremonies the glove plays a double rôle. His Majesty being seated in Westminster Hall, the champion enters, caparisoned as an ancient knight, and the herald-at-arms proclaims the challenge. The champion then throws down his gauntlet which, after it has lain a short time, is taken up by the herald and returned to him. The herald make a proclamation of some length, and the gauntlet is again thrown down by the champion of the realm. His Majesty next drinks to the champion's health and presents him with the cup. The champion then takes up his gauntlet and retires. At the installation in the Abbey, the Duke of Norfolk presents the king with a right-hand glove of elaborate and beautiful design, and the monarch, putting it on, receives from the Archbishop of Canterbury the sceptre with the dove.

That gloves were actually synonymous with kingly power is shown by an instance which occurred in the year 1294, when the Earl of Flanders by the delivery of a glove into the hands of Philip the Fair, "granted him possession of the good towne of Flanders." The wealth of sentiment they enshrined is further manifested by the act of a woman of royal blood. After the coronation of Louis XIII., we are told, Mary de Medicis, his mother, "had the piety to desire the king's shirt and gloves, in order to preserve them carefully in her cabinet."

One of the most dramatic episodes of its kind—when a glove under romantic circumstances was taken as the very embodiment of royal authority—is related in some

papers of D'Israeli. Young Conraddin, the last of the Hohenstaufer male line, having fallen into the hands of Mainfroy, who had usurped the crown in 1282, was brought up for execution. On the scaffold the young prince raised his voice in lamentation and declared his right to the succession. In proof of this he cast his glove among the assembled crowd, beseeching that it might be carried to his kinsmen who would avenge his death. It was taken up by a knight and brought to Peter, King of Aragon, who, *in virtue of the same glove,* was afterwards crowned at Palermo.

The kings of France on the point of death religiously gave their gloves to their sons as a token that they were to be invested with the kingdom. That such should have been almost their last thought and act shows how real to them was the power symbolically invested in the glove.

Gloves, royalty, feudalism—these three are inseparable in history. The granting of lands by the king was the root of the feudal system, in which modern society had its rise, and the lein of the monarch over all lands was the first doctrine of Divine Right. Thus, the glove, by which tenure was given, became also the pledge of the service by virtue of which tenure was held; and on the hand of him who could both bestow the one and demand the other, it was indeed a symbol of supreme authority. In the attire of English monarchs, gloves were especially conspicuous under the Norman and the Plantagenet dynasties when the feudal system was yet young. One would infer that as the

emblematical embodiment of the new order, kings found them indispensable to their dignity.

Kings were even buried with gloves on their hands, when "arrayed in ghostly state, they were gathered to their fathers." Richard I. and John in their tombs wear richly jeweled gloves. It is said that Richard's are the identical ones by which he was recognized in Austria on his return from the Crusades. In Canterbury Cathedral the gloves of Edward, the Black Prince, are hung above his last resting place.

The Bench inherited gloves direct from the Church. On the judge's hands they symbolized incorruptibility, uprightness. In England a maiden assize—that is, a county session in which no malefactor is put to death—is commemorated by a gift of white gloves, even to-day. White gloves here typify a clean record, an absence of felony in the judge's precinct. "They represent the zero of crime," says Beck, "the antithesis of the black cap. They afford a foretaste of the millennium. The occasion of their presentation is held to reflect credit on any town or neighborhood, and is widely noticed in the newspapers." The recorder of Cambridge was the happy recipient of this honor, we are told, three times in succession.

Pardoned outlaws, restored from a living death to all the pleasures of home, the privileges of citizenship and the protection of their king, were accustomed to thank their judges by presenting them with gifts of gloves. Later, however, this practice was abused. The offender was compelled to

appear in person, and by a present of gloves filled with coins to implore and obtain the judges' favor. Thus, by degrees, the glove fell away from its original significance and came to be synonymous with the bribe.

Sir Thomas More once received in grateful appreciation of a case won for a lady, a pair of gloves "lined" with forty angels. As was the custom, this delicate acknowledgment was conveyed to him on the first day of January. "Mistress," wrote the honorable judge in reply, "since it were against good manners to refuse your New Year's gift, I am content to take your gloves; but as for the lining, I utterly refuse it."

So, gloves, like most of the good things of life, were exalted and degraded by turns, and made to contradict themselves. Persons taking legal oath are required to-day to do so bare-handed; and a Portuguese proverb expressive of private integrity, is, "He does not wear gloves."

Keeping the hands covered in the presence of superiors was one of the worst social breaches one could commit in former times. No doubt, the practice of presenting gloves to visitors by universities meant that they recognized their guests to be of such personal standing and learning as to make them worthy of remaining with hands clothed even before the highest collegiate dignitaries. In addition to symbolizing religious, kingly and judicial eminence, therefore, gloves typified also a university honor and were the insignia of the scholar.

At the Trojan games, nearly one thousand years before the Christian era, the gauntlet

was used both as a defensive weapon and as a symbol of defiance. Warlike challenge by the glove, accordingly, had a very ancient origin, and in the days of knightly adventure may have been deliberately imitated from the early epics by a more consciously romantic race of heroes. Challenge by the glove frequently is described by Sir Walter Scott—who, by the way, has more to say about gloves than any other writer, even excepting Shakespeare—but nowhere more eloquently, perhaps, than in *Ivanhoe,* when the Jewish maiden demands a champion.

"'I am unskilled to dispute for my religion' (says Rebecca), 'but I can die for it, if it be God's will! Let me pray for your answer to my demand for a champion.'

"'Give me her glove!' said Beaumanoir. 'This is indeed a slight and fragile gage for a purpose so deadly! See'st thou, Rebecca, as this slight glove of thine is to one of our heavy steel gauntlets, so is thy cause to that of the Temple, for it is our order which thou hast defied.'"

In the life of Sir Bernard Gilpin, relative to customs of the Scottish-English borders it is recorded, that in the year 1560, the reverend gentleman observed in one of the churches in which he was preaching, a glove, hung high against the raftered roof. On making inquiries he learned that it was placed there in consequence of a "deadly feud" prevailing in the district, and that the owner had suspended it in defiance, daring to mortal combat anyone who took it down.

The last instance of defiance by the glove occurred in 1818 in a wager of battle. The

battle, however, never came off; and the instance was the occasion of the repeal of the law permitting the ancient trial by battle and ordeal which existed in England for more than eight centuries.

Gifts of gloves at funerals is a relic of ancient times, as was also their presentation at marriage festivals. In Ben Jonson's play, *The Silent Woman,* we learn that a wedding without this token was suspiciously regarded, and passed for a jest. Cries one of the guests:

"We see no ensigns of a wedding here,
No character of a bridal!
Where be our skarves and *gloves?*"

In Italy and Spain the glove was cherished with the most romantic feeling ever accorded it throughout all its long and impressive history. No king of olden days exercised more despotic rule over his feudal dependents than the Spanish and Italian ladies over their "cavaliers," to whom even to be allowed to touch the fair one's glove was a favor which sent the aspiring lover into ecstacies. Many a yearning Romeo of that chivalric age must have exclaimed:

"Would that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!"

Coquetry by the glove seems to have persisted down to a fairly recent period. The *Spectator* observes that "Ned Courtly presenting Flavia with her glove (which she had dropped on purpose), she received it, and took away his life with a courtesy." Charles IV. of Spain appears to have been in Ned Courtly's class, for His Majesty was so

extremely susceptible, we are told, to any lady who wore white kid gloves, that the use of them at court was strictly prohibited. A charming picture is called to mind also by the recollection of a novel by William Black, in which the guileless heroine all unconsciously captivates the hero the first time he sets eyes on her, by the graceful, ladylike manner in which she draws on and fastens her gloves.

But if the symbolism of gloves and their old, romantic usages largely have fallen away, leaving us an article of familiar, practical, everyday concern, the language of gloves for us is not dead. When we take pains to be fittingly costumed for an important occasion, there is no detail of our dress which we are more anxious should be in perfect keeping, than our gloves. To them still clings a halo of sentiment, part and parcel of our own dignity. In view of their history we are justified in our feeling. "Gloves," says Beck, "outweigh all other articles of apparel which have been the outward and visible signs of hidden things."

## Chapter IV.

# HOW GLOVES CAME TO GRENOBLE

"A French town . . . in which the product of successive ages, not without lively touches of the present, are blended together harmoniously, with a beauty *specific*—a beauty cisalpine and northern—and of which Turner has found the ideal in certain of his studies of the rivers of France, a perfectly happy conjunction of river and town being of the essence of its physiognomy."—*Deny L' Auxerrois: Walter Pater.*

MANY centuries ago, certain chieftains of the Allobroges were inspired to plant their little village of Cularo at the supremely strategic point of all southern Gaul. They built it a trifle to the East of the meeting place of two rivers, the Isère and the torrent of the Drac; north of them stretched the high, unbroken wall of the lower Alps. And there in the sheltered valley they lived and were protected against incursions of other more warlike tribes—until the great conqueror of the world poured its invincible legions over the mountain barriers, and Rome seized the little Allobrogian defence town to be a colonial outpost of considerable military importance. On the site of Cularo sprang up the strongly fortified Gratianopolis, thus called in honor of the Emperor Gratian who reinforced the walls begun by Diocletian and Maximian. Later, with the decline of the Roman power and the development of the Frankish nation, the Latin name was abbreviated to Grenoble—by which the modern city is known to-day as the chef-lieu of the department of the Isère in France.

The town, from its birth to the end of the sixteenth century, was familiarly styled *"la ville du pont,"* the city of the bridge. For more than a thousand years it commanded the only point where it was possible to cross the river Isère. It was also designated "the old Roman route town," for it lay on the natural highroad which linked Italy on the north with the country of France, the valley of the Po with that of the Rhone. The quaint, turreted bridge which spanned the river in mediæval days provided passage to the Alps from French soil, and was the gateway to France for strangers approaching over the mountains. While its strategic position in time of war must be apparent, the site of the city was no less vital to trade and to later industrial development. As early as 1615 Grenoble was known, far and wide, as "the city of glovers."

The earliest records of the consuls of Grenoble, which have been preserved almost intact since 1244, tell us only of "drapers, tailors, apothecaries and shoeing-smiths" in the city; and in 1489 they mention in addition sailors, pastry cooks, carpenters, barbers—but not glovers. Only the weavers, tanners and curriers of wool and hemp presage the industrial future. There seems to be some question of a lone glover in 1328 who gave his services to the dauphin. But probably this workman made numerous things for his fellow-citizens, gloves included, and at the same time was a dealer in furs and perfumes. In the statutes of the glovers of Paris, dating from 1190, they are styled *"marchands-maîtres-gantiers-parfumeurs,"* master-

merchants-of-gloves-and-perfumes, and are accorded the exclusive right to prepare and sell these luxuries. Furs were usually added to their stock in trade. But the solitary glove-maker of 1328 was in no sense a pioneer of the glove guild in Grenoble, else had he apprenticed to himself other workmen, and the town been filled with glovers fully a hundred years earlier than it was.

The latter part of the sixteenth century was a period of war and domestic upheaval for Grenoble, during which the city government was tossed back and forth among predatory barons until, in 1590, Lesdiguières, "the King of the Mountains," took the town by seige in the name of Henry IV. Under Lesdiguières' remarkably public-spirited governorship, peace returned, commerce was resumed, and natural resources, scarcely recognized before, were drawn upon for the development of new crafts, whose products, now for the first time, were to be exported to all parts of France and even into other countries. Among these new crafts glove-making instantly sprang into prominence.

For the raw materials were everywhere at hand. On the slopes of the mountains, enclosing like the tiers of a vast amphitheatre the city seemingly chosen by Nature to become the mis-en-scène of the glove drama, millions of wild goats fed. Already the tanners and tawers had tested the admirable quality of their skins, and those of the females in particular were found to be of the fine, soft variety, peculiarly free from flaws, so admirably adapted to the making

of gloves. For the process of tawing the skins, moreover, the waters of the Isère, because of their singular purity, were incomparable. And in the city itself—its population now greatly increased by prosperity and peace—lived scores of skilled artisans and their sons, well fitted for the careful cutting and shaping of gloves; while the women, equipped with three-cornered needles, quickly became adepts in sewing gloves by hand.

Other occupations, which now received special impetus in mediæval Grenoble, were the weaving of hemp textiles—for hemp was the most prolific crop of the alluvial river valleys—paper-making, and the manufacture of playing-cards; about 1630, the fruit of the vineyards on the mountain slopes, was turned into wine for exportation, and beautiful pottery and tiles were made of the rich clay deposits of the Drac. But of all these crafts, the one taking first rank from the very start, and the one which quickly identified itself with the town, was gloves. In the municipal acts, glovers often appear after 1606. In 1619 Claude Honoré, a master glover, was elected consul. And in 1664 a certain skilled workman, Jean Charpel, an artist in his line, proclaims himself glover to the king.

"One sees the glovers," observes a noted traveller of those times, "filling all the streets after 1610, and especially the *rues* Saint-Laurent, Perrière, Très-Cloître, and the suburb, together with the curriers, tanners and tawers, and the combers of hemp."

Although most historians date the close of the Middle Ages and the beginnings of modern Europe from the era of the Prot-

estant Reformation, spanning the period from 1517 to about 1560, Grenoble remained for a hundred years longer a mediæval city in every sense of the word. France continued a Catholic country, and Grenoble, sequestered in a southern province, scarcely felt the disquieting breath of the great religious revolution which was sweeping mid-Europe. Its ideas and its civilization changed little, even while fresh consciousness of its natural powers and material resources was impregnanting the city with new industries. The spirit of craftsmanship—that joyous love of perfection, not only in the fine but also in the useful arts, which characterized the Renaissance—was still the ruling temper of its citizens; and the guild of glovers, the most numerous and influential of all the artisans, particularly personified this civic character. If we would gain some notion of the part glove-making actually played in the lives of these people, and the status of the glove-craft as it first appeared in mediæval Europe, we have only to journey in imagination to Grenoble in the middle of the seventeenth century, on the occasion of the great annual festival of the glovers.

It is a clear, tranquil morning in the latter part of July, 1650, and the sun, scarcely an hour's march above the mountains, is flooding with almost tropic brilliancy the matchless paradise of the Dauphiné. In its confluence of rivers and fair valleys, the ancient capital city, Grenoble, shines in the midst of the green plain of Grésivaudan. Impossible to describe the ever-changing charm of the horizons!—as, from the city itself, the eye

sweeps eastward, northward, westward, over range upon range of snow-crowned mountains, under a sky so pure, so glowing, that distant peaks apparently loom near, and the cool breath of Alpine heights gently smites the cheek.

Eastward, the prongs, the pinnacles, the clear-cut outlines of a sierra; it is the chain of Belledonne. From the devastation of its summits and terraced slopes, one divines beneath its summer cloak of verdure concealing only its lower descent, the adamantine rock moulded for all time by the glaciers of the ice age. It is indeed the advance guard of those massive crystal formations, the veritable backbone of the Alps, which penetrate into France from Mont Blanc. On a morning like this, the Swiss peak itself can be seen, cleaving the far-away heavens which overhang Savoy.

In the west the spectacle changes. Beyond the vast plain of the Drac appears a long, white cliff, little carved out—a rigid line of limestone falling sheer to the valley where lies Grenoble. This is the compact mass of Vercors, almost impassable. Yet, suddenly, the cliff makes way; the vale of Furon leaps through the chasm in the mountain wall. An ancient road, winding ribbonwise to westward, puts into communication the valley of the Isère with the wooded brows, the vast grassy hollows, of the Vercors countryside.

Northward, the limestone reappears in the Chartreuse. But these mountains, unlike Vercors, are twisted and broken, resembling a half demolished castle with great apertures and rents in its once impregnable sides.

Their countless little vales and fertile levels glow with stream-fed pasturage and with billowy forests. And everywhere, among the foothills of the encircling ranges, roam herds of goats and cattle, without suspicion of the fate which awaits them with the coming of the great Fair of the autumn at Grenoble.

On this July morning the old town gleams like a strange jewel, set in the spacious, lush meadow lands, stretching league on league, to the mountains. Vast gardens of hemp wave to its very walls. Vineyards veil the nearer hills, and the mulberry dots the plains of the southeast. The Isère, restless, ever seeking new outlet, interlaces with a network of sparkling tributaries the great expanse of Grésivaudan. All the richness of the region, all the amazing variety and beauty with which nature has surrounded this ancient city, seems concentrated, in the early hush and radiance, in an act of worship.

Now the sun has penetrated the shadows below the city walls, and is stealing through the sinuous, crowded streets, peculiar to towns which long have been cramped within the precincts of strong fortifications. The tiled eaves lean so close one upon another, as in some places actually to shut out the sky. If we might fly up like a bird and look down over the Grenoble of 1650, we would be gazing upon a confusion of multi-colored roofs, set at every conceivable angle of picturesqueness, and upon a bewildering congregation of chimneys and chimney-pots. Also, we would note that the town lay on both banks of the Isère, connected by a tower bridge, and pro-

tected on the north by the fortress of the Bastille.

Down in the roughly paved *rue Saint-Laurent* the clatter of sabots on the stones announces that the townspeople are astir. Shutters are thrown open. Bursts of song herald the holiday. Crowds of goats, driven through the streets, are being milked at the house doors. Then, from the Cathedral of Notre Dame—whose foundations, it is said, were laid by Charlemagne—the bells proclaim with sweet solemnity the call to early mass. Out of the houses pour the people in gaily embroidered holiday dress, group joining group with merry exchange of salutations, until, trooping through the narrow streets, the colorful procession appears like a wandering rainbow threading the grey mazes of the old town.

House after house they pass and shop after shop, each bearing above the portal a shield emblazened with the selfsame coat-of-arms—the heraldic device of the guild of the glovers. Their occupants, gayest of the gay, fast swell the throng, with masters and their families and apprentices—the young boys in the retinues stealing shy glances at the pretty daughters of their masters, the maidens covertly returning their admirers' bashful looks.

And now the multitude melts into the tender gloom of the ancient cathedral; their voices are hushed in the sweet fluting of the choir. Above the heads of the kneeling populace glows the shrine of Saint Anne, lit with innumerable candles and smothered in exotic, summer flowers. For this is the

annual fête-day of the mother of the Virgin, the patron saint of *les gantiers,* revered by all good glovers throughout France. At Grenoble, however, the feast is observed with greater magnificence than anywhere else, for the glovers constitute by far the most numerous body, and the most prosperous, of its citizens, and theirs is the crowning festivity of the whole year.

According to monkish legend, the good Saint Anne made a livelihood while on earth by knitting gloves. "The knitting saint," in homely terms of affection the people liked to call her. They were wont to regard her as one like themselves—only holier far, for the great honor God saw fit to confer upon her—fulfilling her simple task from day to day, the needles always busy in her fingers. Their love for her was so strong, indeed, and so enduring, that early in the nineteenth century the glovers ordered a statue of their saint set up in a public square of Grenoble, where it may be seen to-day. It represents the mother of Mary, knitting, with a half-finished glove in her hand and a basket of gloves at her feet.

Mass celebrated, the long summer day is given over to street festivities, to feasting, dancing and pageantry. The doors of the glovers' guild-hall, converted into a flower-adorned banqueting room, stand wide open. The glovers' shops and houses overflow with hospitality. As at a great fair, popular arts and pastimes occupy the squares and spaces before the public buildings; several such distractions begin at once and continue simultaneously. Mountebanks and musi-

cians, folk dances, Columbines and Pierrots, flower-girls, venders of bon-bons and *petits joujoux* of every description, all commingle in a laughing, jabbering, singing, whirling, shimmering, merry-making throng. A wheeled street-stage, drawn by donkeys, with bells jingling about their necks and on their trappings, makes the rounds of the town. Wherever it stops, the gay curtains of the miniature theatre are parted to disclose the play-actors who give a mediæval burlesque of Don Juan, amid the noisy applause and high-pitched laughter of the onlookers.

But the great feature of the day is the pageant of the glovers, in which each master, with his apprentices and family, has his special part. This takes the form of a procession of carnival vans, or floats, drawn by gorgeously caparisoned horses, and followed by crowds of young apprentices and workmen and workmaidens on foot, who enact in pantomime the various processes of glove-making as it was practiced in mediæval days. Beautiful kids and chamois from the mountains, wreathed with blossoms as though for sacrifice, are led by troops of peasant *garçons* in blue smocks. The cutters advance, rhythmically jingling their shears; and the needlewomen move by more slowly, drawing their shining implements in perfect unison through the unfinished gloves they carry in their hands. A spice of rivalry enlivens the exhibition, for every master-glover has taken pains that his own personal retinue shall be as large and as brilliant as possible. Every apprentice is fired with the desire to so comport himself as to be an honor to his master

—and, incidentally, to attract the admiration of the maiden of the house he hopes to win.

Angelus finds the merry-makers still romping, singing, dancing; a little wearily the couples break apart, and the townsfolk once more flock through the streets, transformed in the afterglow to running rivers of gold, and are lost in the stilly dusk of the cathedral. And now the tapers gleam like stars upon the altar of Saint Anne, and the fading flowers send forth a sweet, benumbing perfume, as heads are bowed to receive the evening benediction. On the rough, uneven stones of the floor they kneel, imploring in their hearts the good saint who protects and prospers all devout glovers, that the craft may wax stronger with every year in the city of Grenoble.

So we see an entire community uniting in a great religious, civic, industrial and social festival to celebrate and re-consecrate the craft of glove-making. The place of honor this calling held in former times is unique and striking. In the chapters which follow we shall observe how gloves—and especially the gloves of Grenoble—have sustained their early tradition through three hundred years of political vicissitude and commercial struggle.

## Chapter V.

# THE GLOVERS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

"Lo, the old order changeth!"

HOW the glove craft of Grenoble spontaneously sprang up, took firm root and grew until it controlled, to a great degree, the fortunes of that city, has been shown in the foregoing brief summary of events. The many phases of life with which glove-making was bound up in mediæval days, its social and economic importance to the community and its pre-eminence among the early industries, cannot have failed to be apparent. From about 1600 the chief city of the Dauphiné underwent an astonishingly rapid development.

But, if the seventeenth century was little short of phenomenal in glove history, glove-making in Grenoble was not fated to become one of the leading enterprises of the world without a struggle. The hundred years that followed were at once the most sterile and the most fecund in the annals of the trade—and, for that matter, the same is equally true of the eighteenth century as regards its bearing upon the destinies of Europe. Destructive of immediate results and of contemporary prosperity, this era which endured the birth throes of modern states and the upheavals of the Revolution, was, nevertheless, big with prophetic good. And it is to the everlasting honor of the glovers of Grenoble that they bore their part in this

vast social and political movement, which temporarily threatened death to their personal interests, with their eyes fixed, not upon gain, but upon those high ideals and principles to which their faith clung, even in the midst of business paralysis and social chaos.

While the flame of the Revolution did not break forth until nearly the close of the century, the spirit of modernity and unrest attacked the French people fully a hundred years before the fall of the Bastille. In Grenoble the transition from the old order to the new was anticipated as early as 1691, in response to a proclamation of the king that the business of the country be taxed to refill the royal treasury.

After the brilliant victories of his early reign, Louis XIV. had suffered severe reverses. He was gravely in need of money to repair the military organization. New resources must somehow be found, and that immediately. The only adequate answer which presented itself took the form of taxation imposed upon the business interests of the realm. The glovers of Grenoble, accordingly, in 1691, organized themselves into the *Corporation des Gantiers*, or Corporation of Glovers, to determine how heavily their industry should be taxed in support of the régime. While they felt loyally obliged to contribute all they were able to the king's cause, by the very act of their organizing and by virtue of the funds they furnished, they became masters at home, respected by the monarch, independent and self-governing. Their sacrifice of money to the government

had, in the same hour, bought them their freedom in all that pertained to their local affairs.

The importance of this initial association for an economic purpose scarcely can be overestimated. The Corporation later proved the unit of strength which was to render the glovers, as a body, invincible through the endless chain of vicissitudes, political, moral and industrial, which all but swept away, in the next hundred years, the totality of progress gained in the seventeenth century. In 1590 Grenoble had not 10,000 inhabitants. In 1692 Vauban values the population at 33,000. During the seventeenth century, then, its numbers had more than tripled, and this must needs strike one as the more remarkable inasmuch as city life in that epoch was little developed. Such growth, as we have seen, went hand in hand with the evolution of its industries. In 1692, Vauban wrote:

"The city contains a very numerous bourgeoisie, and is filled with a high quality of of artisans which furnish a great variety of products to the largest part of the province. Its increase has been such that it actually is bursting out of its new ramparts. The city has dire need of expansion; all ranks of people demand it irresistibly."

In 1700 Vauban submitted a plan for enlarging extensively the city proper. This was not to be realized, however, until one hundred and forty years later. Already the tide had turned. The people were passing out through the gates of Grenoble, never to return. The eighteenth century was destined to be such a period of sacrifice and retarda-

tion, in a material sense, as the town had never known, even in the pestilence-ridden, war-mad days which preceded the advent of Lèsdiguieres.

The explanation of the exodus which ushered in the new century leads us back, for a moment, to certain events which, until now, we have not had occasion to mention. A great blessing to Grenoble in the past had been the Edict of Nantes, by which Henry IV., in 1598, had put an end to the religious wars. It had paved the way for the uninterrupted peace of the seventeenth century, and thus for the efflorescence of Grenoble's crafts and industries. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV., in 1685, really marks the turning point in that city's prosperity. The testimony of contemporaries confirms this opinion, and the verdict of those living twenty years later in the famous glove town, assigns to the same cause the steady shrinking of the population during the second decade after the Revocation.

The sudden withdrawal of religious liberty cost France three hundred thousand of her people who emigrated to Germany, Holland, and other Protestant countries. A large element in these emigrations were the skilled artisans. Grenoble alone was deprived of nearly three thousand persons, among them the family of the Lèsdiguieres, many others of the nobility and the gentlefolk, and a large body of masters and apprentices.

In 1705 the city lost five hundred individuals of the religious profession and seventy-three families of "gentilhommes," whose disappearance was no trifling matter,

as these personages had been liberal patrons of the glovers, and it was their wealth which, in great part, had made business move. Industry in Grenoble, on every hand, was in a grievous state—but especially glove-making, the home demand being suddenly removed, and foreign trade little developed at that period.

Such was the deplorable effect of the Revocation. The glovers, however, proved themselves possessed of almost unbelievable powers of recuperation. In 1729 we find the sale of Grenoble gloves spreading rapidly in Germany, Switzerland, Savoy and Piedmont. Foreign trade steadily increased, despite the fact that the population of Grenoble remained, virtually, at a standstill. But trade abroad brought also foreign competition. While the Revocation had actually served Grenoble, indirectly, by causing the ruin of her rivals in France—Blois and Vendome, which could not support the drain of their emigrations; and especially Grasse, which was seriously crippled by loss of its master glovers and the departure of most of its families of wealth—these selfsame emigrations doubtless stimulated the manufacture of gloves outside France. Many of those who had served their apprenticeship in Grenoble, and master glovers holding the secrets of her arts, probably became rivals, in other lands, of the city they once had called their own.

All this complicated subject of commercial relations, the advantages and disadvantages of foreign trade, and the history of the glove market, will be treated separately

and in detail in the chapter which follows. For the present, let us keep to our main issue —the vicissitudes in general of gloves and glove-makers in the leading glove city of the world during the stormy years of the eighteenth century.

From 1737 to 1746 we learn that the life of the Grenoble glovers—on the surface, at least—was comparatively monotonous. The manufacture made some progress, but the possibilities of expansion were not such as to stimulate very keenly those at the head of things. The masters and the workers lived without disagreement, apparently; the time-honored rules of the craft continued to be observed on both sides. In the Corporation a public magistrate managed the affairs of the association; the glovers themselves, it would seem, being too indifferent to take an active part. Prosperity appears to have been just about commensurate with the needs of the Corporation.

And yet, beneath this evident torpor, a vast inquietude was moving, like an earthquake under the sea. A fermentation of social discontent—bred by the philosophy of the times, by the glaring disparity between the ruling class and the working people, the latters' distrust of the morals and the assumed authority of the former, by the teachings of freemasonry and the trades unions—was slowly gathering momentum. In working centres—conspicuously in Grenoble and throughout the Dauphiné—the wealthy people were constantly framing remonstrances, begging the Royal Council to curb the mutterings of the proletariat.

The outbreak of the Seven Years' War, in 1756, increased the industrial depression by cutting off a part of the foreign demand, particularly for gloves, and by calling away from France many men for the army. In 1759 a heavy tax was imposed by the crown upon skins. This proved the last straw. It meant that skins for tawing were hardly to be had, and thus the glovers were without materials for their manufacture. Their irritation was acute, and the parliament of Grenoble was obliged to carry before the king the united protestations of the *Corporation des Gantiers.*

This defence in behalf of the Grenoble glovers was at once an act of justice and an achievement of admirable foresight. The parliament did more than merely present the honest grievances of the industry. With a commendable vigor and pride it laid before the king a constructive measure which was to become the occasion in France of an economic revolution in the skin and glove trades. This was the beginning of the breaking down of custom duties on gloves between provinces. After a few years the internal taxes on this product were entirely abolished. Thus vanished all unfair competition at home, and neighboring glove cities ceased to come under the title of "the foreigner." At the same time, the selling of skins from province to province became free and general. Great fairs were held by the skin merchants, the tawers and tanners, for the benefit of all the surrounding region. Exportation of skins decreased, while home manufacturers rejoiced in the abundance of excellent materials.

The Corporation of Glovers, however, suffered meanwhile from the growing restlessness and vague ambitions of its workers. The old regulations were gradually and inevitably giving way before the awakening consciousness of a new race of wage-earners, grown almost morbidly distrustful of vested authority. The Dauphiné was afflicted with the bad example of many of its aristocrats. The nobility was indeed unworthy of its rank. The pervading restiveness and insubordination of the working class sprang out of a deep, instinctive resentment against the prevailing order. Of course, the first point of friction lay between the apprentices and the masters.

Though the severities of apprenticeship were modified, the former good faith between these two was irretrievably lost. Fear of foreign competition faded into insignificance before this intimate situation—the suspicious attitude toward one another of masters and workmen. Such was bound to be the price of a last, furious assault upon the mouldering ramparts of long-decayed feudalism.

The master glovers, on their side, shared in the social discontent, and participated in the long drawn-out struggle between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie to determine which of these should predominate in the local tribunals. The glovers of Grenoble contended that they, as an organized body of people, no longer merely having a trade, but enjoying also a social position encroaching on the importance of the man of the robe, the magistrate and the attorney, should have the largest voice in the making of the laws. Their

product, they argued, was bringing money into France from England, Germany, Switzerland, and other northern countries, where more than one-half of their gloves were sold. In 1775, it is stated, out of 100,000 dozen pairs of gloves made in Grenoble, 60,000 were on commission for the foreigner. Naturally enough these manufacturers and merchants felt that over an idle, and even vicious, aristocracy, their opinions and practical needs should lead in shaping public legislation.

Further, bitter contention involved the business men of Grenoble with the lawyers of that city, for the latter persisted in looking down upon plain citizens not bred in their profession, and in excluding them from public affairs. In 1789 all glovers were shut out of the city council. In view of the fact that they "gave work daily to more than eight thousand persons, and thus enabled to live one-third of the population of Grenoble," the glovers resented bitterly this deliberate indignity from "les hommes du robe." It only fired them the more to throw themselves into the great conflict ahead; to prove that, even if they could not discourse so eloquently upon public matters as those who had insulted them, "at least they knew how to talk less, act more, and give all they possessed" to the cause of justice.

Thus, with the greatest crisis, perhaps, of modern times approaching, the glovers found themselves, workmen and masters alike, drawn almost before they knew it, into tho very heart of the maelstrom. Industry itself was at a standstill. Nay, it was slipping

backward; for in the midst of such internal suppression of terrible passions, such scorching hatreds, and ideals to set the world on fire, what footing could there be for the arts of peace?

And then the black cloud burst. Grenoble was drained of men whom the actual eruption of the Revolution forced to flee its walls. It was emptied of soldiers departing for the centre of action. The Revolution put out of business many of those following religious vocations, whose offices now were enlisted in grimmer callings; it wiped out of existence the gentlemen of leisure. There had been many of these latter in the beautiful, old city of the Dauphiné.

And who was there left to wear gloves, in all the length and breadth of France? What was to become, in such an hour, of an industry which addressed itself to the pleasure-loving rich, and to the privileged classes? The rich? There were no more rich. Privilege—the title, the robe, the gown? Lost off in the wild scurry of fugitives! In the appalling reaction, such a harmless mark of elegance as the glove, became, so to speak, branded with horror. To be seen in gloves in those days was to be marked for a criminal against mankind; to be suspected of being a Royalist, a lover of the king, a Judas to the People.

So we have the spectacle of the glovers, "plain men of business," throwing over every material advantage, to hurl themselves and all they possessed into the French Revolution. "The Revolution!" cries M. Xavier Roux in his invaluable book, *The Glovers of Grenoble,* published for private circulation

in that city in 1887, "they themselves desired it. They sacrificed to it their money and their effort." Again he says:

"It would seem as though, in their eyes, there were no longer practical 'interests'; there were only *ideas*. Never, perhaps, as then, has a whole people forgotten its industry, it business relations, and suffered itself to be moved by principle alone."

And yet one spectacle more remains—the silent factories on the Isère. For the first time since the founding of its main industry and source of prosperity in the past, we behold the paradox of a gloveless Grenoble!

## Chapter VI.

## GLOVES IN MANY MARTS

"She of the open soul and open door,
With room about her hearth for all mankind."
—*Trade: James Russell Lowell.*

THE first glove-makers in Europe, we may suppose—certainly the first, skilled in that art, to work together in brotherhoods—were the monks of the early Middle Ages. In common with many other old-established handicrafts, the glove trade is deeply indebted to the Church. On this point, William S. Beck, the leading English authority on glove lore of thirty-five years ago, has summed up the conditions most interestingly and clearly. He says:

"Muscular Christianity is no new doctrine. Faith and works were once literally united in a secular sense. Before corruptions crept in, and while monastic establishments maintained the simple lines on which they had been founded, their inmates were the most skillful and industrious of artisans. Weaving, illuminating, gardening, embroidery, woodwork—these and many other occupations were practiced sedulously by the holy friars. The original idea of the founders of these institutions was to bring together a company of Christians who were workers. Benedict enjoins his followers to fight valiantly against idleness, the canker of truth.

"'Therefore,' he prescribes, 'the brethren must be occupied in the labor of the hands, and again at certain times in divine study.'

"The brethren not only practiced," says Beck, "but taught. The monastery became as much the centre of industry as of intellect; and religion was made an active worker with commerce in furthering national interests. The efforts of the brethren often resulted in raising local manufactures to great excellence, so that they obtained more than local celebrity. To the monks of Bath, for instance, is attributed much of the fame which the stout, woolen cloths of the west of England yet enjoy; and under their active auspices, we are told, the manufacture was introduced, established and brought to perfection. In their commercial curriculum glove-making was certainly included, as well as the dressing of leather."

As early as 790, as has been mentioned in a preceding chapter, Charlemagne granted to the abbots and monks of Sithin in ancient France unlimited right of hunting the deer for skins of which to make gloves, girdles and covers for books. These gloves, made in the monasteries, assuredly were worn, not only by the higher orders of the clergy, but by the king and his nobles. They may have been a direct means of revenue among the monks; in any case, they were a favor exchanged for the patronage and support of the feudal lords in maintaining monastic property.

Needless to say, gloves were one of the luxuries of early trade and barter, and it was a late period before they became, to any extent, an article of common exchange. As gifts to kings and personages of high rank, they were borne from country to country, and

thus, to a limited degree, were put into circulation. The Earl of Oxford, on one occasion, curried favor with Queen Elizabeth by presenting Her Majesty with beautiful, perfumed gloves which he, personally, had brought to her from Italy. The Queen, we are told, was so vain of this particular pair of gloves that she had her portrait painted in them. Little by little, as the privilege of wearing gloves spread from sovereign to subject, their trade was popularized, and the glove market, in the modern sense, grew up in response to the increasing demand.

In France, glove-making as an industry, independent of the monasteries, was certainly well established in the twelfth century. In 1190 we find the Glovers of Paris organized under a settled code of statutes received from the king. Across the channel, gloves are first mentioned, as an incorporated trade, in Scotland, where the glovers formed a company called "The Glovers of Perth" during the reign of Robert III., who figures in Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth*, and ruled between 1390 and 1406. This company was principally employed in making buck and doe-skin gloves. Thence the trade spread over Scotland, but it did not long hold its importance. "Dundee" gloves enjoyed a picturesque fame; but Hull remarks, in 1834, that "they had little more than the term to recommend them." Indeed, the greater part of them were made in Worcester, England, and were sewn cheaply, with cotton, instead of silk. A few gloves were also turned out in Montrose, Scotland; the leather for these, however, was sent from London.

In London, the glove trade had existed for many centuries, and originally was carried on in connection with the making of leather doublets and breeches. Deer and sheep skins were used chiefly; but after the introduction of kid gloves into England from France, the former country began to make kid gloves also, under the name of "London town-made gloves," and thus to follow the more fastidious fashions of the French. The glovers of London were incorporated in the fourteenth year of the reign of Charles I., who, on the sixth of September, 1638, granted them a charter, in which they were styled: "The Masters, Wardens and Fellowship of the Worshipful Company of Glovers of the City of London." As early as 1464, however, they had received their coat-of-arms. Even so, the Paris glovers must be acceded priority in importance, as their statutes date from 1190. Moreover, it has justly been said that gloves "came over with the Conqueror," and were really introduced into England from France. Previous to 1066, the glove produced by the Saxons was a rude and shapeless thing, while the Normans brought with them the clever prototype on which the future glove of England was destined to be modelled.

Very early in their history the English began to experience commercial rivalry with the French, and one of the first products to be strongly affected, to England's detriment, was gloves. As far back as the reign of Edward IV., in 1462, we find the English glove trade protected by prohibitory laws. These laws, in later years, must have become obsolete, as they do not appear ever to have

been repealed, and foreign gloves were imported into the country soon after the Reformation. In 1564, however, England forbade any gloves from abroad to enter her ports. Nothing was said about the raw materials being brought from other lands; but France saw fit to curtail the shipment of kid skins outside her boundaries, and thus the English were thrown entirely upon their own resources. French kid gloves—whose quality, after all, it has been impossible to equal in other countries—continued to be smuggled into the British realm to a greater extent, we may believe, than the authorities then realized. The titled people, accustomed to having the best of everything, infinitely preferred the French luxury to the home-made article; and so, it was secretly procured. But, generally speaking, after 1564, the English manufactured their own gloves from native skins, and the trade increased and became prosperous.

On the occasion of the granting of the charter in 1638, certain abuses had crept into the industry, and it was to obviate these conditions that the document was demanded and granted by the king. It reads:

"Whereas, by an humble petition presented unto us by our loveing subjects, living in and about our Cities of London and Westminster, using the arte, trade or mistery of Glovers,

"We have been informed that their families are about four hundred in number, and upon them depending about three thousand of our subjects, who are much decayed and impoverished by reason of the great confluence of persons of the same arte,

trade or mistery into our said Cities of London and Westminster, from all parts of our kingdome and dominion of Wales, that, for the most parte, have scarcely served any time thereunto, working of gloves in chambers and corners, and taking apprentices under them, many in number, as well women as men, that become burdensome to the parishes wherein they inhabit, and are a disordered multitude, living without proper government, and making *naughtie and deceitful gloves:* And that our subjects aforesaid, that lawfully and honestly use the said arte, trade or mistery, are, by these means, not only prejudiced at home, but the reputation the English had in foreign parts, where they were a great commoditie and held in goode esteeme, is much impaired. And also, that by the engrossing of leather into a few men's hands, our said subjects are forced to buye bad leather at excessive rates, to their further impoverishment . . . ." etc. . . . etc.

In view of such abuses as these, the London Company was given very exclusive powers, one of which was "to search for and destroy bad or defective skins, leather or gloves."

The name of the first Master of the Glovers' Company has come down to us in certain parish registers of the seventeenth century, in which he is mentioned as "William Smart, of the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, *Glover.*" In his parish the trade seems to have been especially flourishing.

Perhaps the London industry labored under greater difficulties, on the whole, than

glove-making elsewhere. It had constantly to contend against the secret importation of French gloves into the capital city, and also to maintain its superiority over the imitations of the country manufacturers; for, in England, as in France, competition between the various glove centres was intense. Many London manufacturers, because they could not make their ventures pay, actually became importers and dealers in French gloves—either underhandedly, or openly, as the laws of the land would permit. Invariably they found this greatly to their advantage, since the price of French gloves was low, and the manner in which the duty could be evaded, at that date, ridiculously simple.

Despite the feelings and the best efforts of those Englishmen who sought to foster and strengthen the home glove trade, the prohibitory laws remained always more or less lax—chiefly because the aristocracy and gentry preferred the French glove, and, for the most part, were not interested in the welfare of English glovers and artisans—until, in 1825, the ban on imported gloves was officially removed. The effect upon France was electrical. The British ports were flung open to her at a time when Grenoble, Paris and her other glove cities were swinging back on the crest of the new wave of industrial prosperity and progress which had received its momentum in the days of the Empire—a period which witnessed the revival of much of the former elegance of France, so lately eclipsed by the Revolution. In 1832, the legal importation of French gloves into England was 1,516,663

pairs. As many more, in that same year, we may believe, were also smuggled into the country by the old methods. To France—and particularly to Grenoble—the English change of policy was one of the greatest boons which could have befallen a commercially ambitious people.

To English glovers, on the contrary, the results were anything but fortunate. A brief survey of the vicissitudes of the English glove towns may serve to show how dearly the glove industry was forced to pay for the new national system of Free Trade.

In Worcester, close rival of London, the glove craft is known to have existed since 1571, and in 1661 the Glovers' Company of that city was incorporated. Here an elaborate manufacture was carried on, including "Venetian" gloves, made in imitation of those originally imported from Venice. As long as French gloves were not freely admitted, the beaver gloves of Worcester also enjoyed great prosperity; but with the re-importation of the former, beaver gloves went out of fashion, and the Worcester makers turned their attention to alum leather gloves which were produced in large quantities until 1825.

The complete removal of the prohibitory regulations, however, was fatal to this last-named article, which could not hope to compete with the far finer product from abroad. From that date, the English manufacture rapidly decayed, despite every effort of the masters and the work people to readjust their difficulties. How hard Worcester itself was hit, is shown by a statement given by the Committee of Operative Glovers in 1832. It reads:

"There are in Worcester 120 master manufacturers, who have been in the habit of making, upon an average, one hundred dozens of gloves each, per week, which would be 12,000 per week for the whole; but they are now making something under one-third of that number. By this means, about £3,000 (or $15,000) per week is taken out of circulation in wages alone; which money used immediately to find its way into the hands of the retail trader in the purchase of articles of consumption."

In the year 1825, immediately before the introduction of French gloves, there were few, if any, work people idle in Worcester, and the trade was prosperous. On January 10, 1832, out of one thousand men, the state of employment stood as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| In full employ | 113 |
| Partial employ | 465 |
| Unemployed | 422 |

Of the 465, many did not average more than two shillings, sixpence, per week. The number of children totally dependent upon these one thousand men was 1,748. The poor-houses were overrun, and large sums for relief were paid out of the public pocket. Worcester, the chief glove city outside London, continued to decline.

In Woodstock the Glovers never were incorporated, but the manufacture was pursued from a remote period. Some of the finest English craftsmen labored here to produce a very beautiful glove; and that they attained to a high degree of perfection is certified by the fact that the University of

Oxford, in 1616, presented James I. with "very riche gloves" in Woodstock. Queen Elizabeth also received gloves from the Woodstock makers in one of her festal "progresses." In those times only English deer, sheep and lamb skins were used in the Woodstock shops. Since 1825, however, and the introduction of French kid skins, most of their ancient prestige has been lost.

Hexham furnished a peculiar glove—so long-established that we may regard it as having descended unbrokenly from the old Saxon *gluf*—called the "Hexham tan glove," made from native sheep skins. The gauntlets attached to suits of armor were made in the same style; and many centuries ago it was an important trade in that place. But even its modern substitute fell into disuse about 1830.

York "tans" were popular in the days of protection. Beaver gloves occupied 3,000 persons in Hereford, until the sudden industrial collapse of that town in 1825. Ludlow turned out 70,000 dozen pairs of gloves annually, and employed one-fifth of its population in that trade, collecting the skins from Scotland. In 1832, "not six men," we read, were employed in glove-making there. Kington was another glove centre which failed before the middle of the nineteenth century. The glove workmen of Leominster numbered 900 in 1825; and on the eve of legal re-importation its factories were among the busiest in the kingdom. In 1831, its shops were deserted by all but 163 artisans.

A community whose associations with gloves are particularly interesting, was

Yeovil, where the craft was established as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, giving employment for hundreds of years to peasant workmen and workwomen living over an area of some twenty miles. At one period the number of its masters, cutters and sewers was 20,000, and about 300,000 dozens of gloves of all kinds were produced annually. An ancient folk song of the Yeovil glove-women has recently been revived by the Fuller sisters, to simple harp accompaniment, just as it used to be sung, as a "round" or "part song," by the diligent sewers as they drew their triangular needles in and out of their work. It is very quaint and tuneful, marking the time of the motions in sewing; and its rhythm, no doubt, facilitated the speed and ease with which the women plied their task.

Yeovil was famous for its military gloves for many years. Later, a fine imitation of kid gloves was made there; but these were crushed out by the return of the genuine foreign product. An idyllic industrial community was transformed almost over night into a desperate and dangerous populace, demanding by force the means of bread-winning which so suddenly had been denied it. Hull tells us that to quell these disturbances, two troops of dragons were kept continually in the town, where, a few years before, "a horse-soldier would have been looked upon as a sort of centaur by the lower orders of the people."

A territory, not yet mentioned, which was closely bound up with the prosperity of the glove trade in England, was Ireland. Limerick, Dublin and Cork formerly were

noted glove cities. The "Limericks"—a glove named for its birthplace—were of exquisite texture, and were greatly in favor among the aristocratic English for their property of rendering the hand of the wearer smooth and soft. These gloves were made of "morts" or "slinks," the skin of the abortive, or very young, calf, lamb or kid. Some of them were so beautifully delicate that they could be enclosed in a walnut shell. "No glove ever exceeded the Limerick in beauty," declares Hull. Skin collectors went all over Ireland, and the trade was a great boon to the peasantry. But after 1825, the skins were no longer worth the trouble of collecting, and a great resource of the country was lost.

To one who views these facts it must be apparent that England never was intended to compete with France in the skilled making of the finest gloves. She could content her people with the home product only by excluding all foreign gloves; and even then, the privileged, who could bribe the government, insisted upon the secret importation of gloves from France. To be sure, the wave of protection rose high in 1462, in 1675 and in 1744; but, in every event there came a reaction, as far as the complete prohibition of gloves was concerned. Instead of supplying her own colonies with the home product, England even imported gloves from France, stored them in her warehouses, and then shipped them at an *ad valorem* duty to her East Indian possessions!

The truth of the matter was, French glovemakers early had won the first place in Europe. Struggle as she might, it is exceed-

ingly doubtful whether her rival across the Channel ever could have equalled her prestige. In the heavier varieties of leather gloves, English makers did enjoy—and still do to-day—an enviable reputation; but here their fame stops. England had neither the inventive skill nor the natural climate to produce the perfect kid glove, for which France is so celebrated.

In France itself, we already have traced in the course of other chapters, more or less definitely, the development of the glove market. Particularly we have followed the fortunes of the trade in Grenoble, as being, most distinctively, *the glove city* of the world. We have seen Grenoble guarding her precious art from "the foreigner"; holding herself on the defensive against other French cities, of which, under the old laws and internal duties, she had no choice but to be jealous. We have noted how the Revocation ruined many of her neighbors, even while it stimulated competition beyond the confines of France. In the seventeenth century, Paris and Grenoble enjoyed the monoply of the glove markets of Europe. During the eighteenth century, however, these cities began to cope with Germany, Italy, Austria, and even Russia, in glove-making. The vexed question of the exportation of skins was settled to the advantage of the manufacturers at home, and unnatural rivalry between the different French cities was smoothed away.

The Revolution saw the entire industry, apparently, snuffed out. And yet, so deeply had the glove trade taken root in French soil

that, at the first breath of the revival of culture and refined manners, under the patronage of the Empress Josephine, this ancient art again sprang into being; and, like a miracle, the resurrection of the glovers was complete. At this point the great clients of to-day appeared—the United States, reconstructing itself, and building up its commerce with the foremost marts of the world. The Americans demanded, among other things, the most beautiful gloves of Europe.

Grenoble, on recovering from the shock of the Revolution, the long, dark days of the Terror, found, to her chagrin, that she had a formidable rival in Paris. Naturally, the capital city, the centre of the court, was the first place to feel the effects of the renaissance of glove-making. Paris swarmed with workers, and could get more sewers at lower wages than Grenoble contained within its gates. In 1810, however, the southern city began to reach out into the surrounding country for apprentices; and quickly the peasant people responded by the hundreds and thousands. Many of them flocked to the town, filling the places left destitute by the violent events of the last twenty years; and, for miles about, sewing was portioned out, to be done in the small villages and in isolated households scattered among the mountains. Grazing and goat rearing once more became a profitable occupation.

It proved a long, proud pull—but the glovers of Grenoble were not to be daunted. At last that city's ancient prestige was restored. The War of 1870, instead of being a set-back, was really a help; for the remote-

ness of Grenoble from the seat of war permitted her to continue working, and orders from England and America—which, ordinarily, might have sought other channels—she filled in her factories and home shops. In 1872, to be sure, Grenoble, and all the French glovers, suddenly found themselves up against tremendous, and totally unexpected, competition with Saxony, Austria, Luxembourg and Belgium. These countries had devised a means of placing on the market remarkably handsome lambskin gloves, which rivalled in appearance the fine French kid product and sold for far less. But a few years of obstinately insisting upon the high prices they always had exacted for their goods, soon taught the French manufacturers the necessity of finding a less expensive kid; and with the development of new mechanical inventions for cheaper cutting and sewing, Grenoble presently regained her firm footing.

If the seventeenth century must be considered little short of marvellous as regards glove-making in Grenoble—and it may be compared, indeed, to the first five years of a child's life, in which he makes, proportionately, his most astonishing progress—the achievements of the industry in the nineteenth century, if possible, have been even greater. Apart from the facts of the vicissitudes the trade had had to face, the battles it had waged—and won—all the vast accoutrements of modern machinery and scientific appliances now come into play. Also, a great, inventive genius has arisen, destined to revolutionize the art of glove-making.

## Chapter VII.

## FROM ARTIST TO ARTISAN

"There is nothing impossible to industry."—*Clio, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece.*

UNTIL now we have been dealing with revolutionary movements in the political sense, and, indirectly, their effects upon the glove trade. We presently have to consider the great revolution within the industry itself, which came with the introduction of machinery in the nineteenth century, whereby productive labor was completely transformed and glove-making permanently modernized.

Early in the nineteenth century, the factory system was firmly established in England. The French, however, held out against the system, in great measure, as might be expected of a people who recently had fought so passionately for individual liberty. Child labor was an evil against which the French economists were vehement in their protestations. Apprenticing the young was an entirely different matter, without doubt, from enslaving children from dawn to dark in mills, where they were compelled to repeat unceasingly some mechanical detail of the process, with very little hope of enlightenment or advancement in their occupation. The French, progressive but not greedy, sought to maintain industry upon a humane basis.

With the revival of glove-making at the time of the First Empire, the honored methods of craftsmanship still were in practice. Gloves were made entirely by hand, and the

glove-maker—whether designer or workman —was, in the true sense, an artist. Patterns, cut from thin boards, were laid on the leather, and the shape traced with lead pencil. These designs were cut out with a pair of long scissors. The parts were then sewed together. In order to keep the stitches uniform, the pieces were placed between a pair of jaws, the holding edges of which were serrated with fine saw teeth; and the sewer by passing the needle forwards and backwards between each of these teeth secured neat, even-length stitches. The embroidery on the backs was done with very great care, and necessarily consumed much time. Although these gloves possessed the charm peculiar to most hand-made articles, the matter of fit was purely accidental, for it depended partly upon the elasticity of the leather and even more upon the skill of the maker.

In point of skill no glove workers in the world at that time surpassed those of Grenoble. Relying wholly upon the art of her workmen and the dexterity of her sewing women, the ancient glove city still set the standard of excellence for the rest of Europe —even in the years when she was not in a position to turn out so many gloves, nor sell her product so cheaply, as Paris. Though forced for some time to take secondary place, quantitatively, Grenoble never yielded to her rivals in the matter of quality. If she could not produce the *most* gloves, she at least would furnish the market with the *best* gloves.

The finest tawed skins to be had were prepared for the Grenoble glovers in the mills at Millau and Annonay. Their value excelled

that of any skins tawed by foreigners. On this fact, however, the prestige of the Grenoble glove did not rest. These beautiful skins were sent abroad to manufacturers all over Europe, so, in themselves, they did not create a monopoly in favor of the city really responsible for their superiority. No, it was her method of making gloves, the cutting and the sewing of them, which actually distinguished Grenoble. Her workers enjoyed a privileged position in the industry; they were celebrated far and near. Other localities did their best to entice them away; especially did Germany, Piedmont and Switzerland offer inducements, and, whenever possible, strangers would enter the Grenoble shops to spy upon these artists and steal their secrets. But they were never able to carry this far enough to establish any great competition in the international markets. The Grenoble glove continued to be much sought and exceedingly envied. Not able to procure elsewhere gloves of equal beauty, shapeliness and finish, merchants far and wide were obliged to supply themselves from the city of inimitable artists in the Dauphiné; and thus, without the slightest compulsion from the Grenoble manufacturers, these traders stimulated their business and spread their fame.

The sewing women, M. Roux tells us, constituted a peculiar source of wealth to the Grenoble industry. Their exquisite handwork defied all rivalry; there were no other such accomplished sewers in all France, nor in any other country. To-day they are still celebrated; but then they formed an exclusive

factor of Grenoble's prestige. Apprenticed while young girls, they looked upon glove-making as a career, an art in which they desired to perfect themselves. The traditions of glove-making forebears held them to the ancient *metier* of the place; and even more than the glovers and the male workers, they met the encroachments of self-seeking foreigners with an intuitive distrust and proud resistance.

Under such conditions as these, the glove industry in Grenoble was able to support successfully the extreme vicissitudes of the post-Revolutionary era. Even while the wave of prosperity rolled, now high, now low, in face of other manufacturers it maintained an invincible superiority—none excelled the skill of its handwork. Others were unable to counterfeit this; it could not be imitated; never elsewhere was it equalled.

But meanwhile, right at home, unsuspected forces were slowly working, which were destined to prove at the same time propitious and full of danger for the Grenoble glovers. The real revolution was approaching; the great, internal change which was to be the undoing of the old, the uprearing of a new industrial system upon the razed foundations of the old. The days of the craftsman and the artist were numbered.

Every genius has his forerunner. About the year 1819, Vallet d'Artois, a French glove manufacturer, invented steel punches in three sizes, each of which would cut, or punch, out of leather two dozen gloves at once. This invention was the first step toward the introduction of modern machinery into

the glove industry. It multiplied the efficiency of the glove cutter, so far as speed was concerned, twenty-four times.

In the same year, the genius who was finally to revolutionize glove-making was barely entering young manhood. Xavier Jouvin has sometimes been called a Parisian. He was born, however, in Grenoble, on the eighth day of December, 1800, in the house in the rue St. Laurent, now bearing the number 57. Jouvin was in Paris as a student in 1817, and he lived there again in 1825. But he never felt at home in the least in the French capital. He was a provincial by tradition, birth and natural inclination; a student and a dreámer whose spirit was nourished by seclusion—by journeying inward and exploring its own solitudes rather than by contact with men and affairs.

It seems significant that the first year of the new century should have ushered into the world one of the leading mechanical minds of that epoch. It is also strikingly appropriate that Jouvin should have been a native of Grenoble, since his name, above all others, is identified with the modern industry of glove-making. He was a visionary, whose single need was the necessity of inventing something all his days. He could not see any kind of work going on near him but he must think how he could make it easier by the creation of some mechanical instrument. Without ambition for fortune or for fame, he was only too contented to proscribe his life within apparently narrow limits. Returning from Paris in 1825, he was resolved to enjoy obscurity, the provincial and rural

environment in which his talent throve; while occupying his mind almost exclusively with the study of mechanical processes necessary to assure exact regularity in cutting gloves.

Already this young man had invented a mowing machine, and a planisphere, by means of which, automatically, one could determine the position of the stars for every night in the year. Now, in turning his attention to the problem of regularity of cut in gloves, he was really broaching the great factor which has given modern glove-making its ascendency over the old method—namely, the element of *fit*. At the outset he perceived the exact terms of the problem which he had set himself to solve. First, he must make a general classification of the different sizes and shapes of hands one meets; secondly, he must ascertain the precise extension of the skin required for the measurements of the hand he wished to fit.

By minutely studying hands in the Hospital of Grenoble, Jouvin discovered and wrote out in a rectangle thirty-two different sizes of hands. He furthermore recognized five types—very broad, broad, medium, slender and very slender—each type being divided into two classes. As there were thirty-two sizes for each class, and five types altogether, this made three hundred and twenty different numbers of gloves, which proved more than requisite to the demands of the finest trade.

The dies which Jouvin invented and perfected for cutting out these three hundred and twenty different gradations of gloves consisted of the calibre, or glove pattern, and

the punch, or *emporte-pièce,* and were made of fine tempered steel blades fastened to a back of cast iron. In making the heavier grades of gloves, the die was struck with a ponderous mallet, cutting only one thickness at a time. By cutting only one piece in this way, the artisan avoided any holes in the skins which might have been made in killing the wild animal or in dressing the leather. The thumbs and gussets, or fourchettes—the strips inserted to form the sides of the fingers—were cut with separate dies from pieces not large enough for the body of the glove, thus utilizing nearly every scrap of the material. As the leather was first placed upon a block to receive the blows of the mallet, this grade of goods came to be called "block cut." In "table cut" gloves, however, the leather was tranked out on a table and shaped for the size desired. Then, by means of a power press many pairs were cut at once. The nicest part of this process consists in getting the leather in proper shape. Different sizes may be cut with the same pattern by estimating accurately the elasticity of the leather. Jouvin's calibre is the same by which—under many different systems, of course—all gloves are cut to-day.

Jouvin also studied to determine what degrees of pressure the skin will withstand in different parts, in order that, in every case, just the right piece of material should be selected to produce the measurements desired. Expert knowledge of skins is equally important with proper use of utensils in producing an accurately fitting glove.

In his work Jouvin sought the satisfaction of the scientist and the artist rather than any financial benefit which might have accrued to him from his remarkable system. When he had completed his invention, he hardly realized its pecuniary value; he took out a patent for France, but not for any foreign country. The immediate effect of his achievement was somewhat curious.

During Jouvin's own lifetime his invention not only failed to profit the glovers of his native city, but actually worked them harm. He himself groped his way for several years, in an attempt to find capital and workers which should prove the usefulness of his new method. But the manufacturers scoffed at him. They declared that Jouvin had "vulgarized" glove cutting. The glove cutter was dethroned; he was no longer an artist. A machine did his work, and it was evident that with this machine a good cutter could turn out good gloves from poor skins, while a poor cutter would turn out poor gloves from good skins. The calibre certainly was a mischievous device, and had turned the glove art topsy-turvy!

Like any inventor, Jouvin himself was not greatly affected by all this talk, nor by the rebuffs he met whenever he tried to interest business men; for he was absorbed in the possibilities of further improvement upon his invention. He had discovered the calibre in 1834; in 1838—without having drawn a cent of profit thus far—he added the punch, or *emporte-pièce,* for automatically cutting gloves to measure. In the following year, however, his work suddenly received con-

spicuous public notice. It was rewarded a bronze medal at the Industrial Exposition in Paris. From that moment, Jouvin's future as a glove manufacturer was assured, for men with money rallied to his support. The first thing the Grenoble glovers knew, Germany, Switzerland and Italy had all seized upon their fellow-citizen's admirable invention and were turning it to tremendous commercial account. Their outputs were increasing by leaps and bounds. But, in France, one factory only—that of the inventor—worked, while his compatriots stood still for the benefit of foreign competitors to whom the Jouvin system was free, while debarred from French manufacturers under the terms of the patent.

Of course, lawsuits against Jouvin arose, as other glovers endeavored to have the broad, general idea of stamping out gloves become *domaine public,* or public property. But the industry had so far diminished in Grenoble in 1840 that that city was not mentioned as one of the principle producers of gloves.

Without doubt, the conservative manufacturers of that town learned their lesson. For, in 1849, the year in which the Jouvin patents expired, they hastened to shake off this decade of depression which had seen them bound hand and foot, while the glovemakers of other lands rapidly eclipsed them in importance; and immediately they installed in their shops the new system. With their unrivalled skill and natural precedence now reinforced by up-to-date mechanical methods, the glovers of Grenoble effected a lightning recovery. Moreover, their misfortunes had

not been due to the lack of mechanical equipment alone. Financial panic in America had robbed them temporarily of one of their best clients; and the price of skins had risen to an exorbitant figure in France, even while foreigners knew how to get them, without paying a heavy duty, from Grenoble's own mills at Annonay.

These conditions, however, were soon to be righted. But another challenge to the old régime loomed a few years ahead. In 1867, at the Paris Exposition, some Grenoble glovers paused in front of a fragile, little machine, glanced at it with curiosity, and went home without any idea that that modest piece of mechanism was going to cap the work of the calibre; and that shortly the whole world would possess what, for two centuries, had been the fortune and renown of their native city—the ability to sew gloves perfectly.

The era of labor-saving, quantity-multiply- and cost-reducing machinery had indeed arrived; and Grenoble, once she realized the full significance of "vulgarizing" her ancient trade, did not lag far behind. She faced and conquered great difficulties in the nineteenth century—notably, the large increase in the "centres" of glove-making, as the trade grew and improved abroad; and also she succeeded in finding a cheap, but good, kid to compete with the German and Italian lambskins which looked so well that they satisfied the taste of the general public. These things she accomplished with the help of modern machinery; for which, in a peculiarly thankless and round-about way, the city owed a

great debt to one of her own sons. The European glove world paid its tribute to Jouvin in 1851, when the Universal Exposition held in Vienna voted him a Diploma of Honor.

A later contribution to the technique of the glove was the modern style of fastener, introduced, about 1855, by M. Raymond of Grenoble. His factory was a valuable addition to the leading industry of that city. Roux gives credit to Raymond for all the various changes and improvements in glove fasteners which we have to-day. The old-fashioned lacing has been completely replaced by the clasp, the neatness and efficiency of which could hardly be bettered.

Thus, in the last century, we see virtually every trace of the immemorial methods of glove-making vanish before the swift incursion of modern machinery. A few hand-sewn gloves alone remain to remind us of the days when the *couturières,* peasant women and girls gathered in groups in cottages on the outskirts of Grenoble, or in the *ateliers* of the town, to sing as they sewed gloves for the nobility and the gentry of a former time. But the art has gained by the inestimable assets of fit and individuality in gloves: by the great numbers, also, in which gloves to-day are supplied, that we all may delight in wearing them.

In respect to Grenoble, moreover, it should be observed that, through all these changes and commercializing influences, she has sacrificed not a whit of her invincible good taste. Against foreign competition and the paralysis which she suffered under the Jouvin

patent, she had only the superiority of her product to offer—the suppleness of her skins, the elegance of their cut, the beauty of the tints artificially applied, the finish and durability of her sewing. But these were enough to keep her art alive. They still prevail—and in even higher degree—in the gloves of Grenoble makers to-day.

In the evolution from artist to artisan, there is little room for regret. Already the glove-workers of France have readjusted very largely to changed conditions within the industry; while the consumer and producer alike may rejoice in the widespread accessibility of the finest gloves in the world.

## Chapter VIII.

# ANNONAY AND ITS INDUSTRY

"In France, kid-culture is carried to perfection. . . . To this is due the value of the French skins, which command higher prices than any in the market."—*William S. Beck.*

NO history of gloves would be complete which failed to take into account the old French town of Annonay and its celebrated industry. Annonay has been mentioned several times already in the course of these pages, when the subject of fine French skins was touched upon, and especially in connection with the difficulties which arose over the free exportation of these beautiful leathers to manufacturers outside France. At once the foundation of the glovers' prosperity, and the source to them of hardship and bitter contention for want of proper domestic protection of the trade in skins, both Annonay and the town of Millau were famous as old-established centres of the tawing industry.

And right here, for the benefit of the layman, it might not come amiss to define the distinction between the well-known process of tanning leather, and the less familiar method of dressing skins, called tawing. The latter is applied almost exclusively to leathers in preparation for glove-making. It differs from ordinary tanning in point of the greater care and cleanliness of all the operations. Also, the dressed skin is submitted to a brief fermentation, by piling one piece upon another in a very warm place, so that, under the influence of the heat and the pressure, the

softness and flexibility of the leather may be increased. The actual "tawing" itself consists in treating the skins with a mixture of flour, the yolks of eggs and alum. On the completion of this operation, they are stretched by hand and dried as rapidly as possible.

The expert preparation of glove leather, then, was the chief accomplishment of Annonay and Millau. In regard to the latter, it was that city which particularly was embarrassed by the lambskin competition of 1872. Millau long had made a specialty of tawing lambskin, but had not discovered the secret of making the fine-looking gloves which now, suddenly, were put upon the market by Germany and other foreign countries. These manufacturers abroad redoubled their activities, initiating new styles and even receiving compensations from their governments. For a time Millau folded its arms and submitted, as M. Roux tells us, "in tranquil despair."

But before long Millau makers were hard at work studying and experimenting to produce a cheaper grade of glove which, like its rivals abroad should meet the growing demand for a popular-price article with all the fine appearance of genuine kid. The glove trade, along with other industries of the period, found that it must adapt itself to the insistency on democratization of all products. It must recognize the spirit of the times; and in the cause of social equality, it must furnish those who could not, or would not, buy expensive kid gloves, with an excellent substitute, as far as style and finish were concerned.

Lambskins, at this period, became the glove of democracy; and Millau, quickly overtaking her foreign competitors, is to-day producing fine lambskin gloves which are second to none in Europe.

But, to return to Annonay, whose name is identified with the ancient art of tawing as far back, probably, as the fourteenth century! The place has been called—and not inappropriately—the twin city of Grenoble. Its industry, certainly, went hand in hand and ranked equally in importance with that of the celebrated glove town. Without Annonay tanners and tawers Grenoble would have lacked the fine skins indispensable to her manufacture, and might never have held first position as a producer of the most beautiful gloves in the world.

Also, geographically, there is a striking resemblance between the two cities, which likewise has an important bearing upon their affiliations in commerce. Annonay, in the department of the Ardèche, in south-eastern France, is irregularly and picturesquely built on several small hills, overlooking the deep gorges of the Déôme and the Cance. Thus, it stands near the confluence of two large, swift rivers, almost exactly as Grenoble does; and the waters of these rivers—torrential streams, subject to sudden floods—supply power to the factories of the town. By means of a dam across the Ternay, a tributary of the Déôme, to the northwest of the city, a reservoir is provided, in which an additional supply of water, for both industrial and domestic purposes, is stored. Moreover, the river Ardèche flows in close proximity—like

the Isère unexcelled for its purity. By virtue of the especial qualities of its waters, Annonay has become what it is—the chief home of French dressers of glacé kid skins.

The climate, like that environing Grenoble, is particularly favorable to the raising of goats and sheep. The Cevannes mountains almost cover the department of the Ardèche, and their spurs provide rich grazing country. The peasants are shepherds worthy of that ancient calling. The young kids are as carefully nurtured and watched over as are the children in the family, for absolutely nothing must be allowed to cause any defects in their skins. They must be killed at a tender age, for as soon as the kid begins to eat herbage, his pelt is injured for the finer qualities of gloves. Indeed, the perfect glove animal is milk-fed—and necessarily short-lived.

However, when the kids are allowed to grow up and become goats, their skins are still useful for the heavier, stronger grades of gloves. Such are termed chevrettes, that being the French name for goats. The same care is exercised that these animals shall not meet with any injury to their hides, and good chevrette leather is invaluable for piqué and prickseam gloves, which rank very high indeed.

Formerly, skins of chamoix, and both wild and domestic animals, were collected all over the country by a class of people corresponding to what were known in England as "higglers." Ultimately, all these trophies found their way into the hands of the famous dressers of Annonay. In these days, the leading glove manufacturers of Grenoble

buy their skins "in the raw" at the Spring fairs, which are held at various centres throughout France. When they have assembled their lots, they then ship them to the dressing factory in Annonay.

"The dressing of leather," says Hull, in his *History of the Glove Trade,* published in England in 1834, "formed one of the earliest occupations of mankind in all countries; and it is a significant fact that Laplanders, Africans and Canadian Indians dress skins in the highest perfection, altho' their means and processes necessarily are of the rudest kind. The Laplanders also make very tolerable gloves."

With all due respect to the Laplanders, and other aborigines, we venture to place the tawers of Annonay above even those primitive artists to whom Mr. Hull gave first credit. Mr. Hull wrote his little book to prove that the free trade policy would be the ruination of England's home manufactures—nor was he greatly mistaken, as far as the glove business of his day was concerned. Naturally, this vehement protectionist had little good to say of French methods—which accounts, perhaps, for his going back to the uncivilized peoples to pay his debt for the art of leather-dressing; in England, certainly, at that period, skill in preparing glove skins was sadly lacking.

The finest qualities of French kid skins, suitable for glacé hand-wear, come from the valleys of the Loire, the Rhone, the Poiton and Auvergne. Inferior to these are those which emanate from the extreme south of

France, from Provence and the Pyrenees; as one nears Spain, the skins coarsen.

At Annonay, the skin-dressing industry—like that of glove-making at Grenoble—has been established for so many centuries, that long family lines have devoted themselves for successive generations to that single calling. Fathers, sons and grandchildren have passed their lives and spent their efforts in furthering and perfecting the art of preparing glove skins which should be without a rival. The "French National" skins are the result. Doubtless they are the finest skins in the world.

To appreciate fully the perfection of this art, and its importance to the science of glove-making, a visit to the largest skin-dressing establishment in Annonay to-day would appear almost indispensable. In imagination, accordingly, let us enter the factory in question, owned and operated by Messrs. Briancon & Company. We find it a large, airy, well-lighted, four-storied structure, recently built for the express purpose for which it is now used.

When the skins "in the hair" arrive at this factory they are at once hoisted to the top floor, where they are unpacked and piled up in stacks. The dresser holds the skins on account of the manufacturer of gloves who has bought them at the fairs. To each manufacturer is allotted sufficient floor space in the fourth story of the dressing factory to receive his supply of skins. Each stack is ticketed with the name of the owner or owners—that is, the manufacturer—and its place of origin.

Each layer of skins, as placed on the stack, is well sprinkled with naphtha to disinfect and keep it wholesome. If the hides are to remain long in the stacks before going into the dressing, they must be unstacked from time to time, shaken out, aired, and restacked, to prevent them from overheating. When the dresser receives from the manufacturer instructions to put one of his lots into the dressing, the first thing that has to be done is carefully to inspect each skin in the pile; it is then classified as "hard," "extra strong," or "medium"; as "fine" or "superfine."

After all the skins in the stack have been looked over, and sorted in this manner, they are carried to the ground floor of the factory and placed in tanks of clear, cold water, in which they must remain for forty-eight hours. At the end of that time, they are thoroughly washed in running cold water, and are again put into the tanks, where they are kept for another forty-eight hours.

The next step is one of the most particular in the entire process. The skins are removed from the clear water into tanks of concrete, sunk in the floor of the factory, which are filled with a mixture of water and dead sifted lime. Every forty-eight hours they are taken out and well swilled with a similar mixture; then immediately replaced in the tanks. The length of time skins should be kept in this lime bath depends upon their character and origin. The effect of the lime on the skin is to render it very easy to scrape off the hair. According to the regions from which they come, skins remain in the bath for from ten to twenty-five days. This lime treatment is

the most crucial point in the dressing of kid skins, for it is only after long years of experience that a master dresser knows exactly how long it takes to render—let us say, for instance—an Auvergne skin "unhairable." If the skins are left even twenty-four hours too long in the lime mixture, they are so damaged as to be useless for manufacturing into high grade gloves.

When it is judged that the skins have remained long enough in the lime bath, they are taken out and then energetically washed in clear, running water; after which they are passed along to another set of men who place them, one by one, flat, over a smooth, rounded block of wood, and with a blunt, two-handled, almost scythe-shaped knife, proceed to scrape the hair and fat off the surface of the skins. The "unhairing" completed, the skins, still wet and mussy, are passed on to women workers who trim the edges—to which adheres superfluous fat—with large hand shears.

The next process is to rid the skins of the lime with which they have been charged. Therefore, scraped and trimmed, they are submerged in a large, wooden vat, containing hot water mixed with an entirely new product, invented by Monsieur Louis Peyrache. This product is called "peroly" and is an enemy to lime. When the skins are lifted out of this solution they are found to be quite devoid of all traces of the latter.

Following the "peroly bath," the skins are placed in another large tub full of hot water, above which passes a crank connected with an electric motor, from which crank four shafts

terminating in wooden "stampers" hang down into the tub. The tub also revolves on a spindle connected with the motor. The object of this bath is to free the skins of every vestige of the peroly; and the effect of the hot water is to open the pores in the skins and render them more easily deprived of the animal matter they contain.

The skins have now been well washed and thoroughly cleaned. They appear almost transparent. But the series of "baths" is not over. However, before another is attempted, the skins are laid again across the wooden blocks and as much as possible of the fatty substance which still adheres to them is scraped off with the blunt knives already described. In this instance, as previously, the skins are scraped on the sides from which the hair was removed in the first place, known as the "fleur" side of the skin. Then comes the bran bath. In a mixture of luke warm water and bran they are gently stirred around by means of long, wooden props fitted with ferules of india-rubber. Once more the skins are lifted out and laid on the blocks; and this time the scraping is done on the "flesh" or inside. Another bran bath follows, and now the skins require careful watching. When the master dresser judges that they have stayed long enough in this second bran solution, they are again, one by one, laid over the blocks, when all the remains of the bran are scraped off.

Now the skins are put into a large, closed receptacle, containing a mixture of the yellows of eggs, meal and alum. This mixture "feeds" the skins; it is a kind of "wrinkled

paste" in the beautifying process. It fills up the pores which have been impoverished through the loss of their natural fat and oil. The next day, the skins are taken out of this bath, and are strung up in a large room through which flows a current of dry, heated air. In stringing up the skins here, care always is taken to fold them with the "fleur" surface inside. After they have become thoroughly dried, they are tied up into packets of six dozen each, and left in a dry, normal atmosphere for fifteen days, or even a month. By this time the skins are quite hard and brittle.

To take out the stiffness, the skins now are dipped into clear, cold water for a few minutes. They are left in the air until the following day, when they are passed through a set of rollers which help to make them supple; after which they are sent immediately to the "palisson." This process reinvigorates the dressed skins, rendering them plastic and easily stretched. By the old-fashioned method, it is performed by hand. The "palisson" consists, as formerly, of a large, rounded, blunted steel blade, pointing upwards, and fastened into a wooden block, over which the skin is drawn backwards and forwards, with its flesh side on the blade. After this operation, the skin is rubbed over another blade, similarly shaped, but slightly sharpened. By means of this, the remainder of the flesh is cut away from the surface of the skin, thus giving it the softness and whiteness which, by this time, it will have acquired.

In these days, the "palisson" process is also performed by girls at revolving wheels

run by a motor, and the results obtained compare very well indeed with the old-fashioned method of palisson by hand.

The skins are now completely dressed. Lastly, they are sent to the classing room to be examined by experts and sorted according to their qualities. They are then forwarded to the manufacturers at Grenoble.

In the United States kid gloves manufactured out of skins from all over Europe, and even from northern Africa and China, are to be found on the counters of the glove shops. But the best kidskins come from France, and are invariably dressed in Annonay and manufactured into gloves at Grenoble. The American, then, who buys gloves of French origin, Annonay dressed, and made in Grenoble, may flatter himself that he is enjoying perfection itself in hand-wear.

## Chapter IX.

# THE GLOVES WE BUY

"There's nothing like leather. Leather is a product of Nature. Take a piece of leather and observe the way the fibres are knit together. It is Nature's work. It is so wonderful that man cannot hope to reproduce it. He cannot even re-create it. Boil a piece of hide or skin. It will turn to gelatine. No power known to man can turn that gelatine back into leather. Shred it. No machine can reweave the fibres into their former wonderful fabric. Take all the chemicals which go to make up a piece of leather, and mix them in all the ways that can be imagined, and man cannot make a single inch of leather. Synthetic leather seems farther away than the synthetic diamond."

THE person who enters a glove shop of reputation—or the glove department of any high class store—to buy gloves, probably has a very limited notion of the variety of fabrics and workmanship represented by the goods before him. To this single line of merchandise nearly every country in the world contributes to-day; not merely in the historical sense, in which we have watched the glove evolve through the centuries, but also in point of materials and processes actually used. The glove counter, little as we may appreciate it, brings together the riches and skill of the Orient, of Africa, of Europe, and of the Western World. A glance at some of the names, familiar to us all, as cape and mocha, immediately suggests their origin in far distant countries.

And yet, perhaps for economy of expression—if not from positive ignorance—the general public divides all leather dress gloves into just two classes, "dressed kid" and "undressed kid." Everything with the grain surface, or smooth finish, is designated by

the former term; the latter is popularly applied to gloves with the grain surface removed, or finished on the flesh side of the skin. To the initiated, however, gloves are distinguished primarily by the different kinds of leather of which they are made; and, still further, by the great variety of qualities which each kind of leather is capable of exhibiting.

In the glove trade men talk of "cape," "suede," "doeskin," "lambskin," "kid"—nor is the meaning of each of these nearly so obvious, nor so simple, as would casually appear. If, in every case, the name were properly applied to skins which came from a distinct type of animal, grown in one particular district, whose hide was tanned into leather by its own peculiar process, then the quality and character of each kind of leather would be practically uniform. But such is far from being the fact. When first used, no doubt, each of these terms meant a certain, well-defined thing. Now, however, in the evolution of processes of production, the meaning has been enlarged; and virtually any of these designations covers a much wider scope, even departing radically, in many instances, from its original application.

Let us take, for example, the "cape" glove. In the first place this name was used to distinguish a glove made of skins from the Cape district of South Africa. These skins were large spread, heavy, rather tight grained, and are still used in the production of genuine cape gloves. But the soft, pliable, widely-worn glove, in various weights, now commercially known as cape, is manufactured from

sheep and lamb skins grown in many lands, and tanned and dressed by the method called "napa dipped." What was once the name for a glove made from one type of skins is now the designation for hand-wear made from leather of a particular tannage, for which skins of many types, grown in many lands, are used.

Probably the best types of these skins come from Russia to-day—the district furnishing the most desirable qualities being the province of Kasan and the nearby territory of the Volga River. Others of varying degrees of merit emanate from Spain, as well as from the European Orient—Turkey, Roumania, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Servia; and, to a small extent, from some other vicinities. All these are called Oriental skins. Those with the finest grades of wool, oddly enough, are inferior, usually, to those which have hairy, wiry wool—as far as their desirability for glove leather is concerned. Evidently, then, the place of origin, the character of the pelt, and the method of its tannage, all have important bearing on the quality of the cape glove.

But if the cape is made from lamb skin, what, then, is the distinguishing feature between the lamb glove and the cape glove? How are we to tell them apart? Up to that stage in tannage referred to as "in the white," these two leathers are practically the the same—except that the skins which are to go into the capes are heavier and larger. It is in the finishing and coloring processes that the distinction occurs. The dressing and coloring—which, in fact, is a part of the

tannage of the capes and completes this process—is done by the "drum" or "dipped" method. This colors the skin all the way through; whereas, leather for the so-called lamb glove has the color brushed on the grain surface only, leaving the flesh side of the leather, which is to be the inside of the glove, in the white.

Thus, the visible marks of difference between the cape glove and the lamb glove, so-named, are in the weight of the stock, and in the fact that the cape, when colored, is dyed through the skin, instead of merely on the grain surface.

German tanners have been the largest converters of lamb and sheep skins into cape leather by the napa tannage, which is an alum process. And it is the German stock which, until recently, was chiefly used in the American-made cape gloves. In the year 1913, however, several American tanners devised a chrome cape tannage, which appears to be even superior to the napa process, and possesses the added merit that it may be cleansed in water free of alkali of any temperature up to 212° Fahrenheit. It is this leather—really an American discovery—which goes into the gloves popularly known as washable capes. Since the outbreak of the European War, in 1914, chrome tanning has been further improved in this country; and as real Cape of Good Hope leather is used, the United States is producing to-day the best cape gloves ever known, and the German tanned napa cape is fast being discarded.

While mocha is made from skins grown in

far distant lands, mocha gloves are distinctly of American origin. With the march of civilization westward in the United States, and the disappearance of the antelope from the western plains of North America some thirty-five years ago, a skin was sought by glove manufacturers in this country to take the place of the antelope, which was used in making a glove in those days known as doeskin. After patient search, and much experimenting with various species of skins and different tanning processes, a tannage was perfected for the skin of the Arabian hair sheep which produced the strong, but soft, velvety finished mocha.

The skin derives its name, no doubt, from Mocha, a seaport town of Arabia on the Red Sea, whence, it is said, these skins were first brought. The Mocha hair sheep is a distinct type, and is not a species resulting from cross breeding between the Mocha goat and a kind of wool sheep, as often has been stated. While the Mocha goat and the Mocha sheep herd together, they do not interbreed. The mocha market of the world is Aden, at the southern end of Arabia. The buyers here keep native collectors at the chief points to which skins are conveyed by caravans. These points are Moka, Berbera, Bulhar, Djibouti and Zeylah in Africa, and Hodeidah in Arabia. The skins are sorted and graded according to size, weight and condition; then they are baled, about three hundred in a lot. First, however, they are sun-dried, and are treated with naphthaline to protect them from damage by worms.

In the vernacular of the trade, these skins are referred to as white-heads, black-heads and red-heads. They are thus classified in reference to the color of the hair on the heads of the animals, the bodies being black and white, red and white, or all white. However, as the head colors denote a type of skin with more or less well defined characteristics, these designations are more scientific than would appear. For glove leather the black-heads rank first in quality, the white-heads second, and the red-heads third. The black-head type, which comes principally from the African districts mentioned, is more distinctly a hair skin than the other two types, and has a tighter, firmer texture. With the white-heads, which are chiefly Arabian skins, the hair is of a more woolly character and the fibre of the skin is looser. This last is also true of the red-heads, in which these elements are even more pronounced. Certain other kinds of sheep skins—notably those found in the district between Cairo and Khartum, known as "Sudans"—have been adapted for the manufacture of mocha leather. These yield a much larger spread, coarser fibre skin than the mocha hair sheep; but when tanned by the mocha process, sudans sufficiently resemble the mocha to be sold for that article—except to the expert.

No other glove leather passes through so many different processes in tanning and dressing as does the mocha. This is chiefly due to the fact that the skins, at their source, are handled by the natives in a crude sort of way, and under the crusted, sun-dried surface there are often many defects which do not

show until the skin is subjected to the tanning process. Mocha skins invariably are scratched, scarred and imperfect on the grain surface; for this reason the grain is removed. At the same time, as much of the grain strength as possible must be preserved while eliminating the imperfections.

This method, which is called "friezing," distinguishes the mocha from the suede glove. Though in appearance, when finished, they are very similar, mocha and suede actually are extremely different in character. In the friezed mocha, the outer or wearing surface of the glove, which receives the finish, is on the grain and not on the flesh side of the leather. Friezing merely removes the grain to take the finish, thus leaving much of the strength of the outer skin—while in suede or other "undressed" finishes, this strength is entirely lacking.

The name suede is derived purely from the sueding process, and not from the kind of leather used. Skins with perfect grain usually are finished on the grain surface side and are called glacé. But many with imperfect grain are finished on the flesh side of the skin, by the sueding process. Suede, then, is exactly the reverse of mocha, in that what was the inside of the skin becomes the outside of the glove. Suede leather, obviously, is inferior in strength, if not in appearance, to the same types of skins dressed on the grain side. It has by no means the durability of mocha—though a high-grade suede strikingly resembles mocha.

Although "chamois" is not chamois, it is by no means a sham. And that the "doeskin"

is most likely a eweskin is nothing to its discredit. The chamois of commerce is not the skin of the Switzerland animal known by that name, nor is the doeskin of to-day the skin of the one-time antelope. Both are sheep skins, or parts of sheep skins, tanned and dressed as chamois and doeskins. Collectors and dealers in sheep skins at their source, in some districts find it necessary, or advantageous, to split the skins edgewise, making two thinner skins. The upper part, with the grain surface, is termed a "skiver," and the lower section a "flesher." It is from these flesher sheepskins that the leathers commercially known as chamois and doeskin are produced.

The tanning processes of chamois are many, the most common being the oil tannage, alum and chrome. The finest selections of fleshers, split from sheepskins of the Scotch mountains, and from France, Spain and Turkey, are oil tanned and are used for the production of the washable chamois glove. Another, and comparatively recent, tannage of fleshers, is the formaldehyde process which supplies the leather commercially known as doeskin. Properly tanned for that purpose, these leathers will wash perfectly under the prescribed rules for washing. Trade in these gloves, however, has suffered from intense competition which has forced a cheap, quicker tannage, and one which will preserve the largest possible spread to the skin. And sometimes the washing quality has been sacrificed to secure a finer "face" to the leather. Tannages even are used which render the leather not washable but actually impervious to

water—simply for the sake of the pleasing appearance of the skin when new. These things, coupled with the wearer's careless disregard of proper methods of washing, have cast some measure of discredit upon what are really meritorious gloves.

But, as regards the really reputable chamois glove of to-day! In the first place, how absurd to the initiated is the question, so often asked by the customer, "Is this genuine chamois?" Think of it! An animal grown in the Swiss Alps, and, like the American buffalo, now almost extinct, is supposed by many people to produce chamois gloves for the whole, civilized world! As we have seen, "genuine chamois" is sheep or lamb skin, tanned by a simple process similar to that used on the real chamois, many, many years ago. Sheep skins give the best results; but lamb skins are used to a limited extent. The latter make finer gloves, but not so durable, as these skins scarcely can stand the hard usage this leather requires in preparation.

The entire tanning process of chamois leather calls for absolutely nothing but fish oil. No dye, no acid, no alkali goes into this leather, and thus its washing qualities are unquestioned. After the skins have remained in the vats in this oil a sufficient length of time—a month or more, as is determined by experts—they are wrung out and hung up in drying rooms, without ventilation, and a few fagots of wood kept burning. When thoroughly dry they have what is known as the "natural" or yellow color, and no two tannings come out alike in shade. When a

cream color, or white, is desired, another process follows. An expert goes through the skins, selecting those that have body and strength enough to stand the severe washing they are to get. These skins are put into vats or tubs of clear water and washed "French fashion"—which means, beaten with a club—and are then wrung out again and laid on the grass in the sun to bleach.

If cream color is wanted, a day or two on the grass in the sun will suffice. But if white is desired—and it mostly is preferred—a week or ten days is required for this bleaching, depending, of course, on the weather. Good, sunshiny weather means good, white chamois leather; while a long spell of dull, cloudy weather means a poor shade of white, with plenty of white chalk rubbed into the skins to make them appear whiter. Irrespective of the sun, they will all get *some* chalk, however. It is interesting to note that these skins are supposed to imbibe a great deal of nourishment from the grass as they lie exposed to the sunlight. White chamois gloves, which have been put away for some time in boxes, will begin to turn back to a dull yellow; but if placed in the light, in a store or in a window, they will turn white again.

After the yellowing or bleaching process, the chamois skins—natural, cream or white—have only to go to the doler to be ready for the cutter's knife. At the best, this glove is rather rough looking, but it is simple and artistic, and especially in keeping with the travelling or sport costume. Also, at the end of the journey, or after the out-of-door

game, such a glove may be washed as easily and successfully as a pocket-handkerchief. So, its popularity is enduring.

Already we are somewhat familiar with kid gloves, from our detailed study of the great industry of Grenoble, including the dressers' works at Annonay. Nearly all the kid skins used in glove-making are procured in Europe, and the production really is limited to a very few countries. As we have seen, France leads. Next comes Italy, then Germany, Austria, and—up to the disaster of August, 1914—Belgium. Several months are consumed, and a dozen or more processes are necessary, before kid skins are in the market as glove leather. These operations have been fully described in the chapter immediately preceding. When the finished skins appear "in the white" they are ready for the dyer.

An expert goes through the skins and assorts them for the different colors for which they are best adapted. For instance, some skins will make good tan shades, but would not make greys—and so on, through the entire list of colors. As all skins take the black dye well, it follows that the last sortings go into black. Black and white are the easiest of all to dye; and perfect skins, dyed white, show to the best advantage of any—while grey is a color which is a *bête noir* to all manufacturers and dyers. Hundreds of dollars have been literally thrown away in an attempt to produce some particular shade. Suede leather yields more readily and accurately to the dyer's art than glacé. and furnishes a greater variety of shades. For

this reason, and because of their fine, velvety surface, they are considered by many the most beautiful of all gloves; and by the fastidious are preferred for opera and evening wear.

Kid skins produced in other countries than France all have about the same characteristics. But French Nationals remain invariably the best. It may be added that kids raised in low, flat countries, like Belgium, while presenting a fine appearance, never have the strength of the highland skins.

Lambskins, like kid, are nearly all found in Europe, but they cover a much wider range of territory. Like kid skins, they are carefully nurtured and guarded against imperfections. They are grown in Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Russia and the Balkan States, the product of the latter being known—like the sheepskins for "cape" purposes—as "Oriental leather." For fine lambskin gloves the best leather of all comes from northern Italy, and is termed, commercially, "Tuscany skins"; these rival kid skins for fine grain and durability. Next in value comes the fine French lamb known as "Rigord." Then follow the Spanish skins. The Russian (Kasan) and Oriental skins are of equal value with some of the above named, many of them running very fine in grain and producing remarkably durable gloves. As they tend to be heavier in weight, however, the larger part of this class of lambskins finds its way into men's gloves. It is said that fully 80% of Oriental leather goes to German and English

tanneries, which prepare more especially materials for the heavier grades of gloves.

In the tanning or dressing of lambskins, the processes are practically the same as in the preparation of kid and goat skins for the glove manufacturer. Lambskins also are subjected to the same examination by experts to determine the colors they will take best. In fact, the only real difference between fine kid and fine lamb gloves is that the former is of a more delicate, yet firmer, grain, and produces a better wearing article with more intrinsic value.

Nearly all colors, applied in dyeing both kid and lamb gloves, are put on with a brush. The skins are laid on marble slabs, and the color brushed on, a sufficient number of coats being given to produce the desired shade and to fix it thoroughly and evenly. This explains why colored gloves remain white on the inside, as the dyes do not strike through, Some of the light, or extremely delicate tints, however—as pink, cream, azure, lilac—will not take the color with brushing. In such cases, the skin must be immersed in the dye, or "dipped"; and then the color shows, of course, on both exterior and interior.

After the dyer's work is done, and the skins would appear to a novice ready for the cutter, still another process has to be gone through, requiring an entirely different kind of skilled labor. This is the process of "doling"—mentioned a few paragraphs back, in connection with chamois—and it consists in reducing each skin to a uniform thickness throughout, as nearly as possible. The doler lays the skin on a marble slab and with a

broad, flat knife, sharp as a razor, goes over the inner surface, planing or doling off the uneven places. A thoroughly good cutter always doles his own skins. Some manufacturers, however, employ dolers for this purpose exclusively.

Such are the leading leathers used in the making of fine gloves. Developments in tanning have also brought into use the skins of many animals ordinarily considered of no value to the glove trade. While deer, sheep, kid and calf skins in former days were used exclusively, in our times the skins of dogs. foxes, bears, the cow, the colt, the kangaroo —and almost every hair animal—are employed to some extent. Most of these, however, could never pass for fine products, even among the uninitiated—with the possible exception of colt; and they are used only by inferiors in the trade, with whom the present discussion of glove-making has nothing to do. These coarse leathers are honest enough, however, in the hands of Esquimaux, backwoodsmen, and people who are obliged to provide out of the materials within reach warm coverings for the hands. But, in such cases, the fur is usually left on the hide, deceiving no one.

And now we come to the actual turning of the leather into gloves. Since Xavier Jouvin's invention, the glove cutter has not actually cut out gloves. The old method of tracing the pattern and following it with the scissors has completely vanished. But the glove cutter, still so-called, exercises a great deal of care and skill in cutting oblong-shaped pieces of leather which will make

exactly the size he stamps on them when, later, the gloves are cut out by means of steel dies. In doing this, the cutter uses pasteboard patterns, to be sure; but these are simply guides to enable him to put exactly the right amount of leather into each piece that he cuts, in order to produce the size desired. To the cutter each skin he takes up becomes a new problem. As no two faces are alike, so also no two skins are alike—not even those of the same class.

The cutter first stretches the skin carefully to ascertain or measure its elasticity. Then he applies his pattern to see how he can get the best results quantitatively. In other words, a cutter must exercise the utmost ingenuity to get as many gloves as possible out of the skins he is working on, and not let any of the leather go to waste. In many glove factories, the foreman "taxes" the skins as they are given out to the cutters; that is, he fixes the number of pairs of gloves the cutter must turn out for a certain quantity of skins. After the cutter has stretched, pulled, measured, and finally cut out his oblong piece of leather, he marks the size on it and lays it aside for the calibres, which will be shown in operation later on.

The skilled cutter's work is done, and the pieces of leather he has cut are called tranks. The cutter must know, of course, whether the tranks he is producing are for over-seam, piqué or prick-seam gloves, as each requires a different pattern. The fragments of leather left from the skins after the tranks are cut are used as far as possible for cutting hems, bindings, fourchettes and "hearts," which

latter is the technical name for the little "stay" at the bottom of the wrist opening. And certainly there is very little of the skin which is not utilized after all these items are subtracted. One would hardly realize what a jig-saw puzzle, and in how many intricately fitting parts, a glove actually is, until he paused to examine one and to count the different sections which must be shaped and cut out to go into its making.

Next, the calibres demand out attention. These are the knives which really cut the tranks into the shape of gloves and might, perhaps, be called dies. They run, of course, in sizes; and the process might be likened to the old-fashioned way of cutting cakes out of dough with a tin cover, except that in stamping out gloves the position is reversed. The calibre is locked into a heavy machine with the sharp steel knife-edges up, and the tranks laid on top. A lever is pulled, a heavy weight descends, and the cut gloves are then ready to sew.

Calibres are by no means uniform. That is to say, all manufacturers do not use the same kind; and among the leading, large manufacturers, each has his own cut, or set of calibres, differing from all others in some one or more points. For example, one manufacturer will have the fingers of his gloves made longer or shorter than the average; another will have all the fingers gussetted, while another will have no gussets, not even at the gore of the thumb. Still another has a cut with a specially short little finger—and so on. This results in a very wide variety of "cuts" in gloves, and each manu-

facturer of standard make is satisfied, and thinks his own is the best. It is the discriminating woman who finds out what cut or make fits her particular hand, and then sticks to that manufacturer's gloves.

Gloves are sewed in three different ways. First, the two edges are brought together and sewed over and over. This is called overseam, and sometimes round-seam, and is the method used on all fine, dressy gloves. A second way laps the edges one over the other and sews through and through. This is lap-seam, or piqué, and is popular on gloves for street wear. Third, and last, the seams are brought together, the same as in overseam sewing, but are sewed through and through. This method is called prick-seam, and sometimes sadlers sewn, and is used only on heavy leathers.

The first machine invented for glove sewing was put on the market about forty-five years ago and did overseam work only. It was fought by many of the best manufacturers who continued to make the boast of their hand-sewn gloves. Time has overcome this feeling, and the invention of piqué and prick-seam sewing machines has done away with all handsewing—with the exception of a few sadlers sewn, made in England, and their quantity so small as to be negligible. Even the embroidery on the backs of gloves to-day is done almost entirely by machine. There are one or two styles still shown that are sewn by hand, called tambour. Tambour work is very handsome and cannot be done except by hand—yet; but the limit of machines has by no means been reached.

## Chapter X.

# GLOVES OF THE HOUR

AN interesting modern development in glove making, and one which undoubtedly has come to stay, is the vogue of the silk glove whose popularity has grown to surprising proportions. Oddly enough, the first gloves to be introduced into Europe for women in the thirteenth century were made of linen, and were of very simple design. These may be regarded as the ancestor of the chamoisette and cotton doeskins of our day; while the knitted silk, or "purled" hand coverings, worn by the early clergy, suggested perhaps the gloves of silk fabric so widely in favor for the last half century. Quaint lace "mitts" and gloves of spider-webby texture imparted to the costumes of our grandmothers a charming femininity. But the practical silk glove as a substitution for kid is a comparatively recent achievement of manufacturers who are trying their best to meet the constantly multiplying new demands of modern men and women.

The most hasty comparison of the earliest fabric gloves with those produced in our own times cannot fail to impress one with the tremendous strides the glove art has taken since it became a really modern industry. The silk and linen gloves of mediæval days were loose and almost shapeless; they possessed neither fit nor individuality. Roughly measured to clothe the hands of a king, they might have been worn almost equally well by the lowliest of his subjects.

They were bulky and awkward, concealing, rather than delineating, the character of the hands beneath.

Gloves of leather and kid were first to acquire those traits of individuality which were made possible by Xavier Jouvin's invention of an exact system of measurements, adapted to virtually every size and type of human hand. The perfection of fabric gloves, however, lagged behind. Even silk gloves were indifferently made, and could be had in only a very limited range of styles and sizes. As for cotton gloves, these were conspicuous for their ugliness and cheapness, up to within a very few years ago. And yet, to-day, we have velvety chamoisette and imitation doeskins which, upon the hand of the wearer, are so deceptive that they readily are mistaken for the soft-finished leathers from which they have been named. These fabric gloves, made of white, yellow and many other colored textiles, woven especially for this purpose, are supple, snug fitting, and possess a style of their own. They retain their shape even with repeated washing, and they wear amazingly well. It cannot be disputed that they fill a long felt need in both the masculine and the feminine wardrobes.

Particularly in warm weather the fabric glove, or the silk glove, almost puts out of business the leather glove, which seems heavy, overheating, unsanitary, and entirely out of keeping both with the light costume and the altered mood of the wearer. As summer approaches, we naturally long to have everything about our persons fresh, easily renewable, dainty, light and cool to the touch.

Leather and kid repell us for ordinary wear. Only the finest and thinnest of kid dress gloves find a favored place in the summer wardrobe; while the fabric glove, in countless new guises, becomes increasingly popular with every successive season. Through June, July and August, fabric and silk are worn almost exclusively—and if the period be short, during these weeks at least the washable glove is without a rival.

Just as the chamoisette, or cotton doeskin, provides an acceptable substitute for cape and lambskins for general wear, so the silk glove—the Italian or Milanaise—becomes the dress glove for summer and is appropriate for all except the most formal occasions. The silk glove, indeed, has recently been brought to a very high state of perfection through the growing skill of textile experts and inventors, and by the application of the best glove-cutting and sewing methods; the latter, which have worked such changes in the style and fit of kid gloves, have done no less, proportionately, for the elevating of the silk glove. The soft, delicate, yet firm Milanaise silk fabric now clothes the hands as smoothly, and renders their shape as comely and as full of character, as the kid glove long has been wont to do. Indeed, it disguises the hand even less, and is a real test of shapely knuckles and tapering finger tips. Also, the glistening silk itself is peculiarly seductive, at the same time that it delights the wearer with its luxurious and cleanly contact.

While kid gloves must be regarded as an art whose secrets are best known to the

French, fabric, and particularly silk, gloves are manufactured with enviable success in our own country. Doubtless one of the most interesting glove mills to visit is a well-known factory located in the Alleghany industrial district of Pennsylvania, which, though occupying a comparatively small area, is wonderfully complete and efficient, and turns out by the latest approved methods a large output of high class Milanaise gloves. The president of this company, who is hands, feet and brains to his mill—also a practical inventor and a lover of machines—has made it possible, by courteous attention to every requirement of the trade, to place upon the market a superior product, and to win and hold the confidence of his business associates.

A visit to this particular mill is doubly affording to the student of glove-making because here they weave and dye their own silk fabric. We are able to follow the process from a skein of raw silk to the finished glove in all its accuracy and beauty. Every step in its evolution is attended with admirable carefulness and despatch—the glove emerging almost miraculously from the crude material as it is passed swiftly from one operator to another, each worker contributing one factor more to its final perfection.

The silk strand arrives "in the raw" from Japan, packed in straw bales, and might easily be mistaken for a shipment of tea. In this state the silk resembles fine white hair or, even more closely, spun sugar. It is sent in quantities, as needed, to the spinners, and on its return is put through a boiling

process to remove a gummy substance inherent in the crude product.

The strand is now ready to make the acquaintance of the machines. First of all, it must be wound by machinery upon spools. This process is known, simply, as the winding process. The neatly, evenly wound silk is then conveniently fed from the spools onto other machines which transform it into the warp or foundation for the silk fabric. These warps vary greatly in width—some being like ribbons, measuring about six inches across, others measuring 144 and even 168 inches. They are delicate webs of shining silk with the threads running in a single direction—vertically, to be exact.

Weaving machines next receive the warped silk. Each of these machines is equipped with four thousand needles, or twenty-eight needles to every inch, which knit up the silken web into cloth. As fast as woven, it is dropped and rolled upon a long cylinder; it is very soft and satiny and astonishingly resembles a mass of molasses candy which has been "pulled" until it is snowy white and of glistening smoothness. It is now ready to be dyed. The dyeing is one of the few primitive steps retained in the entire process. This operation is performed by hand, and the material is lifted and worked on long sticks to ensure evenness of color. No machine is capable of giving such satisfactory results.

The final step in preparing the fabric, however—the dressing or finishing—is done by means of an elaborate machine, consisting of sets of copper cylinders or rollers. The

wet, freshly dyed silk cloth is brought to the dressing machine a hopeless looking mass of soppiness and wrinkles. It is rolled upon a large cylinder which passes it on to one smaller in diameter, which, in turn, feeds it off onto a rectangular frame provided with rows of sharp points, like pin points, on both edges. Between these points the silk is stretched as tight as the inflated skin of a balloon. The frame bearing the taut silk is then carried through a long, narrow, heated tent, some twelve feet in extent. It emerges at the opposite end, thoroughly pressed, smooth and finished, and is again rolled on cylinders with layers of paper between the breadths of the silk, in case the fabric may still be a trifle damp, in order to ensure the perfection of the silk.

The Milanaise or Italian silk is now ready for the glove makers. First it passes into the hands of the cutters, who block out and cut by means of dies pieces of silk of the right size for each glove. These dies vary according to the many different sizes of gloves. Another set of cutters takes these pieces and places them in punches which mechanically cut out the shapes of the fingers and the reinforcements for the tips of the first three fingers. These reinforcements hang onto the ends of the fingers. Still other cutters cut out gussets, fourchettes and thumbs from scraps of the silk cloth, to be fitted into the glove when it is sewn together later. In this way every morsel of the silk is utilized.

Before the gloves at this stage are handed over to the sewers they are stamped in a press with the name of the company which

has ordered them for its trade. Aluminum leaf is used in this process, and silver lettering is the result.

Women seated at sewing machines now receive the cut, marked gloves, and the first step toward joining their many parts consists in stitching the reinforcements onto the ends of the fingers. This, of course, gives the double finger tip and is a protection against wear. The backs of the gloves next are finished with fancy embroidery stitchery. In the simplest and cheapest gloves this is accomplished by a single operation. But as gloves rise in quality and price, the embroidered backs become more elaborate.

The thumbs now are stitched together individually and then are put into the glove itself. The next set of sewers stitch in the fourchettes—or sections forming the sides of the fingers—seam up all the fingers, and close up the long seam running from end to end of the glove. Passing into other hands, the openings at the wrists are skilfully bound and stiffened, or faced. Trimmers clip off all superfluous silk in the seams and turn the gloves right side out on wooden sticks. The wrists are then neatly hemmed. Clasps of metal, pearl, or covered with the silk, are stamped into the wrist facings by machinery —and the glove is ready for the examiner.

This is one of the most important steps in the whole process. It guarantees the perfect condition of every pair of gloves which leaves this factory, and ensures the merchant and his customer against any possibility of fraud in handling or buying the output of this company. The finished glove is turned on a

stick resembling the glove stretcher commonly used at the counter; every seam and crevice is carefully tested and scrutinized. If no flaw is discovered the glove is pronounced ready for the packing room.

In order that the goods may present the finest appearance possible and that it may be restored to perfect freshness and shapeliness after passing through so many hands in the making, the gloves are placed on wooden forms in the packing room and enclosed in a heated box for from six to seven minutes. They are then taken out, slipped off the forms, and given to operators who stitch them together in pairs, label and tie them, and pack them in pasteboard boxes according to size and color. The finished glove is now ready to be placed on sale, and is fit to tempt the most discriminating customer of either sex.

But while the silk glove of recent years has become a truly progressive industry, let it not be imagined that the kid glove to-day is resting upon its laurels—great as its historical prestige certainly is! The methods of kid glove manufacture are being tirelessly improved upon; the product itself is of finer grade than ever before, it presents greater variety, it is all the time more cleverly adapted to modern uses. But only the designer of new styles in this important phase of apparel can fully appreciate the possibilities of the glove art as they open before him at the present hour.

The designer of French kid gloves, it goes without saying, is an artist. He may not be a Frenchman, however. It is a mistake to

suppose that all the originality and all the inspiration to create a beautiful article of dress, acceptable to the fastidious of every land, must be of French origin. French influence, to be sure, plays an invaluable part in the education of such artists; but an American, with long training in the glove business, may have both the taste and the talent to invent glove masterpieces which will be eagerly adopted, not only in New York, but also in Paris. A few American experts actually have accomplished this thing, and their work is not to be lightly mentioned and passed over. It deserves our very special attention.

An artist who designs kid gloves, first of all has the feeling for gloves *as gloves*. His object is to originate something beautiful in glove form. Next, he knows the technique of glove-making from A to Z, just as the painter knows his pigments, the laws of color and of drawing. The glove designer realizes the physical limitations of his art, and equally he divines the developments of which that art is susceptible. He is thoroughly familiar with the materials at his disposal, with the machines and the skilled workers he must employ to execute his ideas.

At the same time, he has to be something of a journalist; he must keep his finger on the public pulse, and be able to prophesy what styles men, and especially women, will take kindly to wearing a season hence. Gloves, like everything else in dress, must satisfy the demands of fashion. They must change because life itself is change. They must adapt themselves to the costumes the shops

are showing, to the mode of the hour, the latest conception of smartness and good taste.

In the hands of the designer of practical experience, who is also an artist, this becomes possible. Yet, to most people, gloves would appear a very limited field for the expression of originality! Examine, then, some of the new designs for this year and season. They will answer the question whether so simple and necessarily uniform an article as the modern glove is capable of much artistic variation, and from them also we can learn how such novelties are evolved.

Every large glove company has its own classical models—that is, there are certain standard styles of kid gloves of the best manufacture which virtually do not change from season to season. These have names, which are as well known in the glove trade as the names of real laces, of old, established design, to exporters and importers of that delightful commodity. For instance, in a famous glove shop on Fifth Avenue, New York, we are introduced to three classical styles—the Florine, the Seville and the Isère. These are all fine French gloves, of a cut and finish familiar to many of us. They are the foundation of all the other styles, which are simply clever variations of these three.

For example, the Florine, a simple, overseam glove, acquires a one-inch cuff of a contrasting color—and with it the romantic title of Bandallette. Many beautiful color combinations may be seen in the new Bandallette —alabaster with a brown cuff, canary with white, gunmetal with pale grey.

The Seville is distinguished by its crochet-embroidered backs, affording a much heavier finish than the stitching which decorates the Florine and the Isère. A deeply fringed cuff of kid is added—and lo, the Spanish cavalier becomes a knight of quite another cycle! Hiawatha, this picturesquely slashed glove of purely American inspiration is called—most reminiscent of the fringed decorations of aboriginal chieftains is the odd device which gives it its new-world *bizarrerie* and flavor. It is especially striking in pure white and black.

On the other hand, a two-inch cuff sporting large diamonds of white kid set in a black border—or the colors may be reversed—is known as the Van Dyck, and doubtless has caught something of the character of early Flemish design. The Van Metor may be mentioned as similar. This is a particularly beautiful glove when made in white kid, stitched with black, and adorned with white cuffs, scalloped or pinked, and appliquéd with black kid cut in deep, sharp points which taper upward.

The Isère is especially adapted for variations of a dainty, delicate character. While the Seville lends itself best to two-toned embroidery in handsome, heavy effects, on the backs, the Isère is displaying just now on a white kid model rows of fine, black feather stitching between slender lines of plain stitching.

Another distinguished glove, the work of the same expert designer, is the Fielder, vaguely reminiscent of an old English hunting glove. In black, with a very long wrist,

the striking feature of the Fielder is the deep, fan-shaped piece of white set into the wrist on the under side; it also fastens with a cleverly adjusted strap, clasped with a white pearl fastener. This is a very dashing glove.

A black glacé with white stitching has a fancy embroidered design on the back which gives to it its title of Dagger. The dagger is delightfully managed in conventionalized form, and reminds one of the adornments on crested gloves of ancient days.

Nothing could be more exquisite than the new gloves embroidered with bow-knots. If they are black, the bow-knots are in white; if white, the graceful design is embroidered in black. Either effect is charming; but the white gloves seem redolent of old valentine customs, when the true lovers' knot might well have appeared upon a perfumed pair of dainty gift gloves such as these. The wrists also are parti-colored, gaily striped in white and black, like Pierrette.

A very long-wristed, modish glove is the Garnett, in white kid, with four black straps confining the fulness of the flaring cuff which is lined with black, and all the stitching black. Indeed, while delicate tints are seen in many of the novelties, the effectiveness of the new designs is best grasped in the black and white combinations. In any case, mere description gives little or no notion of the many interesting, beautiful styles which are appearing—nor of how much imagination and invention goes into the devising of these styles from season to season.

There is a world of comfort, too, in the thought that while such artists as these con-

tinue to concern themselves with gloves as a thing of beauty—gloves for gloves' sake—we may rest assured that commercialism will not devour the more subtle distinctions of life. If such a trifle, let us say, as our gloves is being zealouly guarded and saved to the canons of good taste, certainly we may hope to retain a true sense of elegance, and our requirements in respect to the little niceties which make up the general deportment of a people shall be continually elevated.

If the foregoing description of the gloves of the hour may have seemed redundant, or of too ephemeral interest, to the reader, let him pause and reflect that, after all, we are ourselves makers of glove history; and it may be that glove lovers of the future will be as grateful to find on record the gloves of our times, as we have been gratified to rediscover the glove annals of remote periods of human history.

FINIS